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POEMS: by
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On Cover: Drawing by Palencia, 'La Nina del Regulo'

World Review Guide

LITERATURE

1910

In Disgrace THE VICTORIANS

In Fashion REALISM (Shaw, Ibsen) appears in contrast with Nouveau Art (Maeterlinck) and symbolism; and literature of organised socialism in contrast with THE LITERATURE OF BROTHERLY LOVE AMONG THE UNCOMPLAINING AND SAINTLY POOR, and Christ appearing in various disguises. (Tolstoy and Dostoievsky.) FIRST OMINOUS APPEARANCE OF 'THE LITTLE MAN' (Wells, Chesterton), Charles Lamb, Sir Thomas Browne, Keats, Elizabethan lyrics.

Going Out AESTHETICISM

Coming In THE HUGE IRRATIONAL SUBCONSCIOUS 'IRRESPONSIBLE' MOVEMENT, sweeping everything before it. Freud, Joyce, Stein, Apollinaire, automatic writing. First Futurist Manifesto, 1909.

1920

In Disgrace The Georgians, The Victorians. Anatole France.

In Fashion Joyce, Stein, Lawrence and DARK, UNCONSCIOUS 'Jung and unafreud' in all forms. Virginia Woolf 'The Waves': the 'cactus desert' of preciosity: Eliot; Aldous Huxley; Edith Sitwell's 'Gold Coast Customs' 1929—Breton's Surrealist Manifesto 1924—Relativity—Jazz. Jacobean dramatists (Webster). Metaphysical poets. Dante, Golden Bough—all on the 'drier' side of romanticism. Translations from Chinese, etc.—DISPLAY OF LEARNING.

Going Out Last vestige of symbolism (appearing in weakened form as fauns, pierrots in moonlight, etc.

Coming In THE REACTION to acute forms of social responsibility.

1930

In Disgrace Kipling (*not* made Laureate in 1930)—all suspected of patriotism and gentlemanliness: Tennyson, Arnold, Galsworthy Arnold Bennett, etc. Georgian poets.

In Fashion Auden and school: POLITICAL LITERATURE: Left-Wing Book Club. Satire and DETERMINED BRIGHTNESS CONCEALING SENTIMENTALITY (Linklater, Rene Clair, Hemingway). Schoolmasterliness. Life in the raw and proletarian literature. Documentaries. Pope (Edith Sitwell's 'Alexander Pope' 1930). Eighteenth century in general to the fore. Bryon, Gerard Manley Hopkins. Proust. Criticism through ambiguities (Empson, Richards) and semantics.

Going Out Temporarily, Eliot, Huxley, 'the cactus land', the 'irresponsible' movement.

Coming in NEO-ROMANTICISM: Dylan Thomas, Barker.

1940

In Disgrace Charles Lamb, Georgian poets, Housman, Lytton Strachey (as having criticised Victorians).

In Fashion Dylan Thomas, Barker, Apocalyptics—Existentialism (in popular French form, the cult of the 'absurd' and the amoral hero.) *Horizon*; Victorianism; criticism through association of images; Darley, Rilke, Rimbaud, Kafka, Melville, Christopher Smart, all representing A REVIVAL OF THE ROMANTICS AND IRRESPONSIBLES. Schelling, Kierkegaard, Fairy tales. Yellow Book.

Going Out Auden and school. Political literature, dryness, ambiguity, logical positivism.

Coming in RELIGIOUS REVIVAL. Kipling.

1950

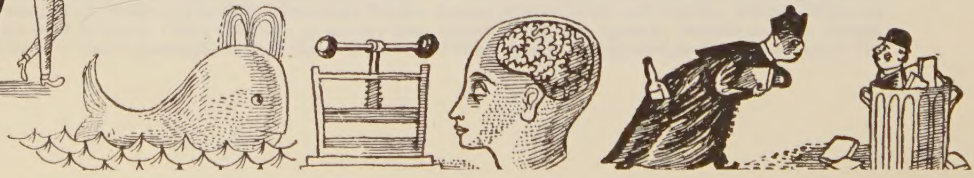
In Disgrace Auden and school. Political literature.

In Fashion Religious novelists and poets (Eliot, Graham Greene, Waugh appear in new rôle. Individual responsibility. POETIC TRAGEDY, SOUL-SAVING.

Melville, Henry James: generation of 1910, symbolists.

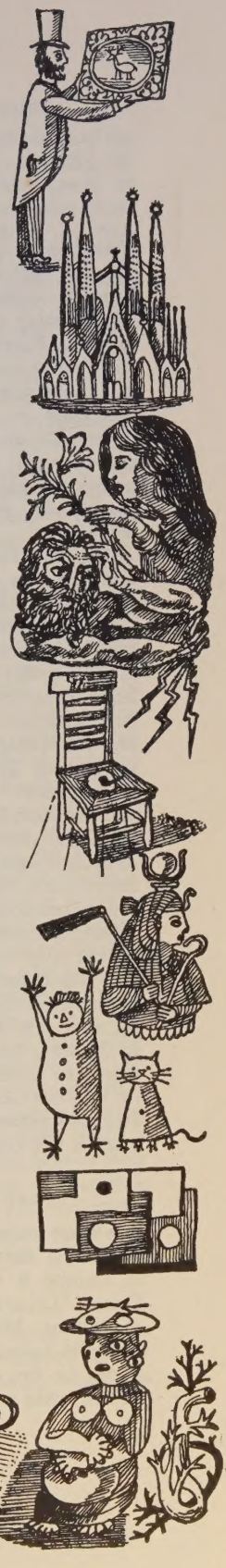
Going Out Existentialism, surrealism, etc.—THE END OF THE GREAT EPOCH OF 'IRRESPONSIBILISM'. Joyce, etc. are studied, but as classics of the past.

Coming In Realism; respect and pity for humanity. Total collapse of 'little man' theme.



to Fashions in Taste

MUSIC	ART
Wagner and Richard Strauss	Victorian and academic painting.
Parry, Elgar, Debussy's Impressionism Symbolism of *Pelléas* Ravel	Cubism, derived from Cézanne (first Futurist Exhibition 1912), routing Impressionism.
Verismo of Mascagni and Charpentier	Impressionism, Nouveau Art. Arts and Crafts.
Folk Song Revival (Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams), Bartók, Kodaly in Hungary. Influence of Russian ballet in Western Europe: STRAVINSKY *Oiseau de Feu, Petroushka, Le Sacre.*	Futurism, Surrealism, Naïve Painters (Rousseau Banquet 1908). Fauvism.
The Late Victorians (Parry, Stanford).	Victorian and academic painting.
Holst (PLANETS 1919), Vaughan Williams, Scott, Scriabine, STRAVINSKY. Jazz. Les Six in France—Poulenc, Milhaud, Honegger, etc. Influence of Chabrier, Satie, Cocteau.	Everything not modern (a healthy period). Vorticism, futurism, Magic Realism; Egyptian art (Epstein, Tutankhamen's tomb), Fauvism: delayed effect of Russian ballet. Total scorn of the public.
Impressionism.	Lovat Fraser's *Beggar's Opera* shows last gasp of the Japanese woodcut influence. Cubism in its classic form.
Cosmopolitanism of Bemers, Goossens. Retarded influence of *Le Sacre* (Bliss), Purcell. Elizabethans. Hindemith, Weill, Krenck	Political consciousness in Art.
The Edwardians (Elgar, Bantock).	Victorian and academic painting (now also suspect politically) languishes until Sacheverell Sitwell's *Narrative Art*, 1937.
Vaughan Williams (JOB, 1930). Walton (*Viola Concerto*, 1930). Lambert (*Rio Grande*, 1929). Bax. Delius. STRAVINSKY	Surrealism (though its best work is finished), political Art: (Picasso's '*Guernica*'). Rapport with the working man (heyday of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*). Rubens, El Greco, Italian primitives. Piero de Francesco.
Holst, Scott, Scriabine	Abstract Art.
Discovery of Sibelius (Gray's biography, 1934). Political Music: (Bush: *Piano Concerto*, 1938, Ireland: '*These Things shall be*', 1937, Britten: *Ballad for Heroes*, 1939).	The menacing twilight of a romantic revival.
The flippancy of Les Six and other music of early twenties.	Reynolds (and everyone who had in any way criticised Blake), Lawrence, Constable, Corot, Monet, Gauguin, Raphael.
Sibelius, STRAVINSKY.	Blake, Samuel Palmer, Fuseli, Martin, the high romantics of the eighteenth century: John Piper and school of 'peintres noirs'. Victorianism eclipses eighteenth century.
The Neo-Romantics (Bax, Bliss).	Surrealism, political motives in art.
Britten, Berkeley, Rawsthorne, Tippett, Mahler, Twelve-tone School influence spreading West from Vienna.	Etty, Pre-Raphaelites, Alfred Stevens, Victorian and academic painting.
The Neo-Romantics (Bax, etc,).	Van Gogh, da Vinci, Botticelli, Vermeer, Constable (except sketches).
Britten, Berkeley, Rawsthorne, STRAVINSKY, Mahler, Berg, Bartók, Martin, Dallapiccola. Twelve-tone School (Searle, Lutyens).	Pre-Raphaelites, Alfred Stevens, early Watts; Illustrators of 60s; Realism (latest work of Hepworth, Nicholson): religious art.
Sibelius.	Unprofessionalism, children's art, primitive art and all attempts at rapport with the common man.
Fricker. Rehabilitation of Richard Strauss: *Metamorphosen*, 4 last Songs. Belated discovery of Nielson.	Gustave Moreau, Böcklin: Nouveau Art, Raphael.



Notes

SHAPE

THE Foreign and Defence Ministers of the Atlantic Pact countries when they met at Brussels replaced Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery as Commander of a non-existent European Army by General Eisenhower as Commander of an, as yet, non-existent Atlantic Army. They succeeded in reconciling most of their differences on the subject of European re-armament, but the really important question remains what size force is General Eisenhower going to have under his command.

The Atlantic Army will, however, come into being as a force as soon as General Eisenhower can set up Supreme Headquarters Atlantic Powers Europe. He will then take operational command—and this in itself makes his task easier than that of Lord Montgomery—of three French, three American and two British divisions, with Dutch and Belgian contingents. That makes about nine divisions now, to be joined later by more American, two more French and two more British divisions, working up to twenty divisions by the autumn. It is difficult to escape the conclusion, however unpalatable, that the Germans must be pressed into service—*wie einst Lilli Marlene*—if General Eisenhower is ever going to have a force large enough to stop the Russians' first attack and give us time to raise in a hurry the divisions which we are not raising now. The Allied High Commissioners in Germany have already agreed with Dr. Adenauer to discuss a new political basis for Western Germany and to set up a military committee to study the scale and manner of a German contribution of men.

FRANCE AND BRITAIN

The most encouraging—or perhaps more accurately the one encouraging—feature in Europe is the end of neutralism in France. 'Let us not forget,' said M. Pleven, the Prime Minister, when asking the National Assembly to vote 740,000 million francs for the military budget, 'we have not an ocean or a channel. In certain circumstances France cannot be effectively protected if she does not in the very near future put into the field, together with her allies, a large number of divisions.' Whatever the effect in America of ex-President Hoover's suggestion that America should withdraw to her own hemisphere—and it does not seem to have been great—it certainly had a remarkable effect on the French. Too many people, in this country as well as in France, have got into the way of taking American money and men for granted. Mr. Hoover has let us know that there are at least some Americans who doubt whether we are worth any expenditure of lives and dollars. We owe it to the great majority of Americans—and to ourselves—to prove not only that we are worth American aid, but that we are essential to American safety. And we can best do this by taking the military situation in Europe much more seriously than we have done so far. It is useless, and dangerous, for Ministers of the Crown to say that the Government will not allow the re-armament programme to interfere with its social programme. If we want peace, and to survive, nothing must interfere with re-armament.

THE UNITED STATES

Ten billion dollars is the sum President Truman is proposing to spend on Europe. Half of this gigantic sum will be spent on the direct supply of arms to the countries of Western Europe. The other half will be spent indirectly to finance European re-armament. 'There is no watertight distinction between military and economic assistance,' he said in his message to Congress, but he may have some difficulty in getting Republican Congressmen to admit what is now an apparently obvious statement. In the last two wars, of course, the Americans did make a distinction between military and economic assistance, and with a difference of emphasis. Today nobody expects Mr. Truman to have any difficulty in getting Congress to agree to supply arms by boat-loads; it is the economic assistance

it may jib at. In the past, the Americans started by being prepared to help financially but it needed a *Lusitania* or a Roosevelt to produce the arms.

A Defence Production Board, under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, will control the allocation of dollars to European industries. The mere fact that the post of Director of this Board has been offered to the president of the International General Electric Company is enough to show that the American Administration is determined to get some return for the American tax-payers' money.

YUGOSLAVIA

An article in this issue of *World Review* traces the history of the dispute between Tito and Stalin. The Russian economic blockade, combined with a serious drought last summer, has brought Yugoslavia very near to ruin and starvation. It is little consolation to Tito to know that the same drought, without a blockade, has reduced Hungary to an even worse state. Mr. Popovitch, the Minister of Foreign Trade, has boldly, and perhaps prematurely, said that Yugoslavia has now successfully reorientated her trade westwards. The situation, however, was so bad that the United States made a grant of $38 million for famine relief. Apart from this, both the United States and this country have made small loans to tide the country over till its next harvest. The question remains, however: will the Yugoslavs be allowed to get in the next harvest? The Cominform press and radio stations are becoming more and more menacing. They harp on Tito's alleged intention of engulfing Albania, and promise to take preventive action.

The Eastern satellites are now said to have 600,000 men under arms and Tito has accused them of carrying out widespread military preparations against his régime and continually enlarging their armed forces far beyond the limits allowed to them as former Nazi allies. Against this force, Yugoslavia can muster about half a million men, with several hundred Russian T.34 tanks, good artillery and a small air force. The Western powers should decide now what they will do if 'volunteers' start to 'liberate' Yugoslavia.

YUGOSLAVIA AND KOREA

The Yugoslav leaders are well aware of the dangers they are facing. Mr. Kardelj, the Foreign Minister, ended his speech of thanks for the economic aid with the words: 'This proves that the danger of war does not come from differences between internal systems, but from hegemonic aims and imperialism.' *Komunist*, the Yugoslav Communist Party's official organ, has told the workers of the world they they must 'get rid of illusions about the Soviet Union representing some force of democracy and peace.' The object of the war in Korea, as the Yugoslav Communists see it, is an attempt by Russia to re-establish its own prestige, and to use any success there to intimidate all other countries and territories in the path of Russian expansion.

EAST GERMANY

The East German Government has struck a new blow for 'peace'. Its Parliament has passed a law—if such terms can be used of such a procedure—providing the death penalty for any German 'who takes orders from the officers or agents of States conducting a war—inciting or aggressive policy against peaceful peoples.' Under this ordinance the Western German Cabinet and the Bundestag deputies, newspaper editors and correspondents in the Federal Republic and West Berlin and any German who might enlist in a Western German defence force, become automatically guilty.

Democratic politicians, like Ernst Reuter, Berlin's Oberbürgermeister, who have got into the habit of travelling along the Autobahn between Berlin and Bonn, may well decide that it is now wiser to take to the air rather than place themselves at the mercy of such a writ. Other Western Germans with less *Zivilcourage*—never a strong German virtue—may consider such a threat amidst all the uncertainties of their present situation a deterrent or an excuse which the Western Allies, with their more scrupulous regard for the processes of law, will find it difficult to combat.

SPAIN

In spite of the Civil War, Spain's population increased by 10 per cent over the last ten years. Unfortunately this increase has

been accompanied by a decline in the production of many staple commodities, such as grains, beans, olives and oil. Added to this, a drought lasting most of 1950 and stretching into this year has crippled Spanish industry. The result is the beginnings of inflation. The maturity date of the 1945 issue of Treasury Bonds has been postponed; there has been a serious decline in savings, and attempts to limit the fiduciary currency circulation have so far failed. As against this state of affairs, the Government can set up a substantial dollar loan, and, of course, the 'diplomatic triumph' of being let out of Coventry.

Frankly, we need all the soldiers we can get on the Continent. The Spaniards are excellent soldiers, as they showed on both sides in their ferocious civil war, but if we enlist them, we must remember that we will have to equip them. We must also tell General Franco that Gibraltar is ours, and that we intend to keep it.

ITALY

Signor Randolfo Pacciardi, the Italian Defence Minister, is perturbed at the rise of neo-Fascist groups in Italy. The Government seems to have the situation well in hand, but it has met strong opposition to its proposed new law against Fascism. There are now no less than twelve Fascist weeklies in Italy, all extolling the glories of the past régime. A determined effort has been made to attract monarchist sentiment, but little has been done to evolve a concrete programme. The main cohesive force is a series of negatives. Chief among these are the exaltation of the Duce and his German colleagues as the only people who knew their business as far as Russia is concerned, and an Anglophobia which accuses England of stealing Italy's colonies under the pretence of giving them independence and then keeping her troops and administrators there for the last ten years. Meanwhile the Government is proceeding with the more useful tasks of improving its relations with Yugoslavia and trying to find some outlet for that emigration which is essential to Italy. It must be some encouragement to them, as well as to the householders of England, that the National Union of Mineworkers has at last agreed to accept Italian miners in the Lancashire pits.

Signor de Gasperi proposes, when he has got the necessary grant out of the Italian Parliament, to increase the Italian army to the twelve divisions allowed by the Peace Treaty and then to offer to General Eisenhower the three divisions which already exist. Italian troops vary in quality more than any in the world, but most men who fought in the last war would agree that Italian field-gunners would be an asset to any army.

STRASBOURG

Mr. R. W. G. Mackay, the author of a compromise plan at the Strasbourg Assembly which devised a legal solution not only to the dispute between the functionalists and the federalists, but also to the declining powers of the Council of Europe, has had the satisfaction of seeing his plan adopted by the seven-man commission appointed to study it. Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, Antonio Azara of Italy, Marga Klompe representing Holland, Georges Bohy, Belgium, Maurice Schumann of France and Carlo Schmid, the Western German Social-Democrat, have now approved the details, which are to be submitted to the next meeting of the committe of Ministers in the Spring.

This plan provides for an effective European Authority to be endowed with limited functions but real powers. The European Assembly would be called upon to devise legislation covering such specified activities as transport, agricultural, trade and defence, gradually acquiring political power with each step. It preserves the single nation veto power in the proposed Parliaments Upper House—the Committee of Foreign Ministers—and would thus ensure that no individual government would be called upon to implement general legislation to which it had not given its full agreement.

* * *

'Foreign policy is not a matter for argument with students.'—SALAH EL DIN, Foreign Minister of Egypt.

'Politics have come to a pretty pass, if Mr. Strachey can remain a member of the Government after its formal decision to wind up the East African groundnut scheme.'—*Economist*, 13/1/51.

THE CLASH LESS BAFFLING

GEORGE BILAINKIN

TODAY the mystery of the violent attack of the Kremlin and the Cominform on Tito is a trifle less baffling than it was in June 1948. Yet, for anyone anxious to understand the minds of the Soviet chiefs, it is important to discover the origin of the clash. Gradually a few facts are becoming available, notably about the differences between Tito and Stalin in 1942, 1943 and also 1944. Their secret quarrels in 1945 over the plan to make Yugoslavia a superior European colony, over Trieste and over Austria, led up to the final open quarrel, but I doubt whether the purists' favourite explanation, that the climax in 1948 was due solely to ideological differences between Tito and Stalin, is tenable.

It is true, of course, that Tito could not, as soon as the battle was over and their services were ended, liquidate the small landowners and minor shopkeepers with the ruthlessness demanded in Moscow. He could not do so for the simple and obvious reason that the Partisans who liberated Yugoslavia included only a small percentage of Communists, though they were the spearhead of the fantastic campaign. He, therefore, had to create the Yugoslav National Front. It is also true that Tito and his friends were often obstinate, independent, and lacked cowardice in expressing their views. But the harsh economic and financial deals Soviet experts attempted to impose on Yugoslavia after the war merely helped to underline reservations about the Russians which had been born amid the vain appeals for military and political aid in 1942–45.

To the great majority of the people of Yugoslavia, and to everybody else in the world, the news of the excommunication of Tito by the Kremlin, in June 1948, came as an unbelievable blow. The Dutch Minister in Belgrade assures me that, when he visited 'well-informed' heads of missions on the evening of the announcement, he was told, 'Tito will be out in a couple of days.' The following night, at the Papal Legate's reception, diplomatists agreed that Tito would be 'liquidated' in a few days, or would be driven out by armed invaders, or would be overthrown by a palace revolution. Yugoslav leaders away from Belgrade were startled. At Lake Success Dr. Joze Vilfan, an Assistant Foreign Minister, informed reporters who questioned between sessions of the United Nations: 'This is Western propaganda.' Dr. Vilfan perhaps remembered the eager words of the Assistant Soviet Foreign Minister, M. Gromyko, 'Treat my home as your own while you are in America', but the day after the Cominform resolution Gromyko failed to recognise Dr. Vilfan in the corridors.

In Belgrade, however, the internal reaction was more pointed. The Minister for Economic Planning, M. Boris Kidric, Marshal Tito's friend from their days together in Paris in 1936, told Dr. Joze Brilej (now Ambassador in London): 'The Russians will put the screw on Yugoslavia relentlessly.'

To the local observer a form of warning had been sounded some months previously. On 1 January 1948, Stalin and Molotov did not send the usual message of good wishes to Tito. (At least, my study of the newspapers of the time has not revealed a telegram.) Only Georgi Dimitrov, friend of the Federation of South Slavs, wired from Sofia to Tito, 'I greet you warmly and through you also the brotherly people of Yugoslavia.' The leaders of other lesser states also wired on New Year's Day. But Stalin's last published message of 'best wishes to the brotherly peoples of allied Yugoslavia' was dispatched on 29 November 1947.

The Soviet attitude towards Tito and the Partisans in the years 1942–3 and early 1944 is incomprehensible, even in

the light of wider acquaintance with the relevant telegrams. Within a fortnight of Hitler's assault on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the Yugoslav Partisans rose against the Germans and Italians. They were pitifully armed and lacked clothing and food, but they liberated a considerable part of Yugoslavia. In February 1942 the Russians wirelessed Tito:

> 'There is a possibility of our sending men to you in the immediate future. Give us details as to where aircraft can come down.'

On 17 February, Tito replied:

> 'We urgently need medicaments, particularly anti-typhoid serum. During offensive 160 cases of serious frostbite. Send us munitions, automatic arms, boots and material for the uniforms of the men . . . Anything you could send would be of great moral and material significance.'

The same day he assured the Russians that a landing field was ready near Zhabliak, by Mount Durmitor, Montenegro, 'on completely liberated territory'. He gave details of the rockets and signalling, adding optimistically, 'Commencing 23 February. If you send us sufficient military equipment,' he added, 'we can mobilise 100,000 men. Arrival here of a number of parachutists would have enormous moral and political effect.' Night after night Pijade marched seven kilometres through the snow, but the aid did not come.

On 13 February 1942, Moscow suggested that the Supreme Staff of the Partisans, in the name of the Yugoslav people, should make a short proclamation to the peoples of the occupied countries, particularly Czechoslovakia and France. It should point out: 'Your people is fighting for liberty and independence; the Supreme Staff should call on those peoples to cease making war materials, or supplying bloodstained Hitler with raw materials or foodstuffs.' Moscow added: 'We could give such a proclamation the widest publicity in the press and by radio.'

Tito accepted the proposal on 23 February, but remained without news of the proffered aid. Instead, on 10 March, he received a telegram explaining that his proclamation had a 'party character', was asked to delete the words: 'which were organised by the Communist Party' in one passage; at the end of another passage he was told to add: 'Hitler will not be able to withstand the powerful coalition of America, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R., about which all freedom-loving peoples are rallying.' Stalin also asked Tito to remove the following slogans: 'Long live the uprising of all enslaved peoples of Europe against the invader! Long live the heroic Red Army! Long Live Comrade Stalin! Long live the Soviet Union!' Instead only two water and whisky slogans were to be used: 'Long live the united struggle of all downtrodden peoples against the invader!', and 'Long live our victory over the common enemy!' Stalin's legalistic anxiety in 1942 to be loyal to the wartime coalition is clearly suggested by the telegram concluding: 'We firmly grip your plucky hands', which he sent to Tito early in March:

> 'Defeat of the Fascist bandits and liberation from the invaders, these today constitute the main task, the task which stands above all other tasks. Take into account that the Soviet Union has treaty relations with the Yugoslav king and Government, and taking an open stand against these would create new difficulties in the joint war efforts and the relations between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Britain and America on the other. Do not view the issue of your fight only from your own, national standpoint, but also from the international standpoint of the British-American-Soviet coalition. While doing all you can to consolidate positions won in the national liberation struggle, at the same time do show political elasticity and some ability to manœuvre.'

On 22 March Moscow sent a 'personal to Tito' message explaining that, until the situation between the Soviet Union and 'the Yugoslav government' had been cleared up, publication of the proclamation should be delayed.

The Partisans' position was getting desperate, and on 19 March Tito again asked for arms and munitions, adding, 'We are in a critical situation owing to the insufficiency of ammunition. Please do all possible to send us ammunition and

military material. Tell us if we can expect anything, and when.' What was the explanation? To the starving Partisans in the snow of Montenegro, nightly waiting for the sound of a friendly aircraft, weary of the uneven fight against a powerful foreign enemy and with the Chetniks round the nearest corner, came a message from Moscow on 29 March:

> 'All possible efforts are being made to help you with ammunition. But the technical difficulties are enormous. You should alas not count on our mastering them in the near future. Please bear that in mind. Do all you can to get arms from the enemy and to make the most economical use of what ammunition you have.'

Pijade was told by Tito to do no more night duty and to 'explain to the men as you think best.' Pijade says the soldiers wept when told to disperse, after waiting for thirty-seven nights. The endless requests to Moscow continued to be answered with advice about 'a general approach to the Yugoslav government', and warnings that Tito should not expect 'either munitions or automatic weapons from here at an early date . . . the principal reason is the impossibility of getting them to you.' Could that be really true?

Meanwhile Tito was sending captured documents to Moscow, to show that Mikhailovic was collaborating with the enemy. Yet he was always asked to send more proof. Since Mikhailovic's rôle was already clearly realised in London, presumably it would be known also in Moscow. On 22 December 1942, Sir Orme Sargent told the (Royalist) Assistant Minister Milanovic at the Foreign Office, 'The Communists are much more active than General Mikhailovic, they are the only ones fighting in Yugoslavia; Mikhailovic stopped fighting in October last year, which makes it difficult to fight Soviet propaganda against Mikhailovic.'[1]

Throughout 1943 Moscow tried to convince the Partisans that 'technical difficulties' prevented the dispatch of supplies to Yugoslavia. But the documents of the time show an unbrotherly flexibility of policy towards Tito. In November 1942 Moscow approached the royalist government in London—controlling Mikhailovic, its nominal Defence Minister—and suggested sending 'high-level officers to your Staff, to set up direct contact with you, and form squadrons of yours in Russia, to get assistance to you, and develop joint broadcasting.' Jovanovic, King Peter's Premier, rejected the proposal in a top secret telegram specifying the terms under which the royal cabinet in London would discuss the suggestion.

In despair Tito telegraphed to Stalin on 31 January 1943:

> 'Hundreds of thousands of refugees are menaced by death from starvation. Is it really impossible, after twenty months of heroic, almost superhuman fighting, to find some way of helping us? Twenty months we have been without the least material assistance from any quarter . . . Typhus has now began to rage, yet we are without drugs, people are dropping like flies from starvation, yet do not complain. These starving people give our fighting men their last crusts and themselves drop like flies, they give their last sock, shirt, or boot, and themselves, now in midwinter, go barefoot . . . '

Moscow was not moved, and sent a long explanation ending on a parsnip note that proved wrong in 1948: 'You are doing a great thing, which our Soviet land and all freedom-loving peoples will never forget.'

In May 1943 the British dispatched a military mission to Tito from the Middle-East, and by July 1943 the British had sent him equipment in seven aircraft. Tito then again asked for a Soviet military mission. It arrived on 23 February 1944. It was not till April 1944 that two Soviet aircraft dropped equipment for the Yugoslavs.

It is clear that Russia never minded offending Tito and the Partisans. In November 1943 the Communist and other parties' delegates to the second session of the vital, brave Anti-Fascist People's Liberation Council (Avnoj) at Jajce made Josip Broz-Tito Yugoslavia's first Marshal, and elected a national government on territory freed from the invaders. Tito telegraphed Moscow that the Avnoj had decided not to recognise the royal cabinet

[1] pp. 464–5, Documents, *Trial of Mikhailovic*, 1946

in London and would not permit the young king to return, 'for that would mean civil war', because for two and a half years the London government 'has been supporting that collaborator with the invaders and traitor, Draza Mikhailovic.' The Russians ignored a request to put the declaration on the agenda of the meeting between Cordell Hull and Anthony Eden and Molotov; indeed, they said it was 'a stab in the back'.

As late as 1 January 1944 Stalin sent a message of goodwill to Puric, Peter's Premier, Tito's principal civil opponent, saying, 'I am convinced that 1944 will be a year of victory for the United Nations. The moment is not far distant when the Yugoslav peoples will achieve their liberation from the yoke of Hitler's tyranny.' It was an unhappy, needless challenge to Tito.

In August 1944 the Supreme Soviet sent Tito a sword of honour 'in recognition of the Yugoslav people's great fight against the enemy', but at the same time it was concluding one of the astonishing agreements of our time. While Tito's friend, Moshe Pijade, who had spent fifteen years in prison for Communist activities, was enjoying himself at the reception given in October 1944 in Moscow by Molotov for Churchill and Eden, Stalin was consenting to the Anglo-Soviet division of Yugoslavia into 'a fifty-fifty sphere of influence', unknown to Tito or to Pijade. The original proposal on 5 May 1944 came from Mr. Churchill through Mr. Eden to the then Soviet envoy in London, M. Gusev, Mr. Cordell Hull told Lord Halifax in Washington that he strongly disliked that kind of scheme. And, it must be added in fairness to M. Stalin that M. Gusev, while agreeing, asked, on 18 May, whether the United States had been consulted.[1] On 12 June, in the absence of Mr. Cordell Hull from duty, President Roosevelt gave his final consent. Mr. Cordell Hull himself only heard of the decision on 26 June through the United States envoy to Greece, Mr. Lincoln MacVeagh, stationed in Cairo, who had, in turn, been informed by his British colleague.

In the general current amnesia no one in the Labour Party has been sufficiently curious about this plan. Nobody has so far had the independence to press for information about the 'division' of Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary with eighty–twenty or seventy-five–twenty-five predominance for Soviet Russia, while Britain and Russia would share a Sudanese-kind of condominium over the sixteen million inhabitants of Yugoslavia.

Why did Stalin agree to Churchill's scheme? Because, perhaps, he was eager not to continue to reject any proposal about the Balkans from the West, to which he was still allied; or because he did not wish to lose a legitimate opportunity of earning interest on the capital of a singularly generous promise made to him—on Churchill's behalf by Sir Stafford Cripps—in the darkest days of July 1940. Cripps, the new ambassador who had come to Moscow without Letters of Credence in the understandable muddle of June 1940, assured Stalin, in a three-hour talk, that 'unification and leadership of the Balkan countries for the purpose of maintaining the *status quo* was rightly the task of the Soviet Union.'[2] Stalin may have reasoned that Britain was eager now to forget 1940 and to put her nose in the Balkans, but he felt sure that, with the presence of Russian soldiers, the danger could not be grave. And in the ebullient days marking the end of 1944, a few risks might conceivably be taken with the British war leader.

Another surprising fact, however, is that Yugoslav leaders assured me a few weeks ago that they knew of this agreement within a few days, 'thanks to a courteous allied diplomatist', but, 'we did not for a moment imagine the implications, merely felt that the two sides were safeguarding our future.'

It is probable that, about the end of 1944, Tito's popularity had suddenly gone down with both Stalin and Churchill, with the former because of the conditions he wished to impose for the entry of Soviet troops during the liberation of the Balkans, and with the latter, over his 'secret' flight from the island of Vis to Rumania and Moscow, without any prior communication to the head of the British military mission then on the island. Pijade, who was

[1] pp. 73–7 *Tito* by George Bilainkin, London, 1950; p. 1452 *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 1949
[2] p. 167, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939–41*, State Department, U.S.A., 1948

in Moscow, told me he thinks the Russians insisted on secrecy; Tito assured me a few weeks ago that he went without warning anyone because that had been his custom throughout the revolutionary days; a third member of the entourage says, 'Tito enjoyed the mysterious packing of the trunks, and keeping the ubiquitous British from knowing . . .'

Early in 1945 the quarrels were accentuated by other factors of which so far nothing has been published. The complaints that Tito read on his arrival in Belgrade immediately after the Yugoslav-Soviet liberation were to be counted by the dozen. He could not be happy when relating the allegations of Russian misbehaviour to fellow-members of the Politbureau. The situation was embittered by two facts—that Yugoslavs treat their womenfolk with a propriety unique in Europe, that the Big Brother liberators were entering the territory of an allied Slav people.

More disillusionment came later because Tito hoped for Soviet influence with the Western Powers in his campaign to leave his troops in Trieste and Austria. Over Trieste there was only a rude reply from the Russians, and from the British and Americans the threatening march of soldiers into the Yugoslav military lines. Over Austria there came a sympathetic note from Moscow: Yugoslav troops could remain in the Soviet zone of Styria; London and Washington issued a peremptory demand for 'immediate withdrawal' of Yugoslav troops. Tito must have pondered long on those warm phrases of Churchill's: 'A new and more formidable champion who holds fourteen out of twenty Nazi divisions in the Balkans', 'An outstanding leader', 'His heroic and massive struggle against the German armies . . .'

Angry, disappointed with Stalin and with the West, disheartened by the appalling spectacle of an earth that lacked any semblance of machinery or homes, cats or dogs, food or clothes, Tito cried out his thoughts in a famous speech in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia, at the end of May 1945. He had been robbed of the prospects of gaining the port the Italians had been awarded in the secret treaty of London, 1915, for desertion of their allies, Germany and Austro-Hungary; he had been kicked out of the portions of Austria for centuries inhabited by Slovenes. Yugoslavia was to be a 'fifty-fifty colony'. He thundered:

> 'It has been said this war is a just war and we have taken it for a just one. But we demand also a just ending of the war. We demand that everyone be master in his own house; we will not pay the accounts of others; we do not like to provide the cash for other people's exchanges. We do not wish to be mixed up in a policy of spheres of interest.'

The Russian Ambassador Sadcikov was immediately directed to warn Tito that the speech was inimical, and, if he should again utter such an attack on the Soviet Union, 'we shall be compelled to answer in a critical way in our Press, and denounce him.'

This quarrel begins another chapter in the Stalin-Tito clash. Tito had spoken his mind. And now came fresh danger: he was becoming a power, maybe a rival, behind the scenes with the Soviet 'People's Democracies'. The evidence of his popularity was impressive. Even the Hungarians invited his aid in Prague, so that the Czechoslovaks should not be too harsh with the minority in Slovakia. Tito agreed to intervene with the Prague chiefs. And I know that plans projected by M. Masaryk for certain claims against Poland were not publicised, nor proceeded with in newspaper polemics. Rakosi, then Hungarian Vice-Premier, who now attacks Tito so bitterly, visited Tito in Belgrade and sent messages of warm gratitude for his reception. Other 'People's Democracy' leaders and their wives enjoyed holidays in Yugoslavia. The receptions for Tito on his tours of the neighbouring capitals in 1946 and 1947 were 'royal'.

A few weeks ago when Tito discussed this popularity with me and I suggested it might be part of an explanation of the subsequent clash with the Kremlin, he related what happened in Bucharest in December 1947. Snow was falling heavily but large crowds waited about to hear his speech. A rumour was then 'spread' in Bucharest that Tito had gone over to

the West, and this explained the swift, sudden, disappearance of the many photographs of him from the windows of the capital.

In July 1948 I was in Belgrade. One morning about four o'clock, while walking back to the Majestic Hotel, from the General Post Office, where I had left a telegram for London, I saw men removing the two-storey high pictures of Stalin and Lenin, Marx, Engels and Molotov. The Yugoslav Communist Party Congress had just ended in a victory for Tito against Stalin. This act at dawn seemed symbolic of a sordid divorce. The brief love match (culminating in the ubiquitous treaty with everyone else of friendship, of alliance and so on) had ended. I did not imagine that the hatred which might ensue could reach the indecent passions the Cominform has seen fit to rouse in 1949 and 1950.

Many of the goods Yugoslavia paid for in the Soviet Union, and the other Eastern States before the break, have not been delivered; much of the equipment and machinery settled by contract lies on the Eastern side of the new Iron Curtain. The Cominform press and radio wage on the entire periphery an organised attack which, for scurrility throughout all the waking hours, makes the Goebbels effort seem like the blast of an emasculated snail . . . 'Tito powders his face', 'the leaders drive in American limousines,' etc., etc.

In 1948 the entire economy of Yugoslavia was 'safely' geared for credits and material aid from the Eastern States. The changes obviously necessitated by the Russian economic blockade were not made sufficiently fast or sufficiently drastically. Now Yugoslavia needs immediate aid from the West, food for the population till next harvest because of the disastrous drought, machinery to raise her mineral wealth from the ground and to cut her prolific store of timber. She also needs help from peoples who suffered less than she did to win the war.

The threats of reckless neighbours are being heard in Yugoslavia's besieged capital. These threats should be heeded now far beyond Belgrade, for they do not only warn Tito.

THE WELCOME

D. ABSE

For the summer, I had prepared myself for the summer
planted flowers for my gay friends, in my garden.
I hoped for such a display of colour in the summer.

Into my garden visitors trespassed, into my garden,
insolent, criticising, ordering me to cast away these seeds
saying no flowers would ever grow in my garden.

Now summer has come and one red flower has come
out of the tender repudiated earth of my garden.
But because of its sad red invisibility no guests will come.

So I am left alone with this flower-phantom in my garden
with the lonely echo of red no neighbour chooses to see,
left with this invisible fire sorrowful in my garden.

Who will enter through the gate, who now will enter?
No friend, no stranger, will sojourn in my garden;
only my own blind love will sense this red reflection and enter.

THE SIEGE OF ATHENS

GENERAL MAKRIYIANNIS

Translated by C. M. Woodhouse

Makriyiannis, who lived from 1797 to 1864, was an almost illiterate Greek peasant until he taught himself to read and write adequately for the express purpose of recording his Memoirs. He rose from poor and humble origins to the rank of General in the Greek forces, fighting for their independence against the Turks from 1821 to 1827. The long autobiographical work, from which the following passage is translated, was written intermittently between 1829 and 1850. The greater part of it deals with the Greek War of Independence, but Makriyiannis also covers at length the political agitations of the early years of independence, in which he again played a vigorous and turbulent part. He was a born fighter, and a patriot of the utmost simplicity and even naivety. All these features will be found in the style and manner of his work, which is here translated as literally as possible.

The passage which follows describes the siege of the Acropolis at Athens by the Turks under Kiutayhé (the Greeks' name for Mehemet Reshid Pasha) from July 1826 to June 1827. The Greeks had captured the town from the Turks in 1822. Their first military governor of Athens was Odysseus Androutsos, a brave but irresponsible semi-brigand, who was murdered and replaced by John Gouras in 1825. Makriyiannis arrived, with a considerable reputation from the Peloponnese, to serve under Gouras later in 1825, but he showed a marked preference for the more soldierly command of the French Colonel Fabvier, who had been sent to Athens to organise a regular and disciplined force. These are the principal characters in Makriyiannis' narrative of this episode, which begins in the late summer of 1825.

THE wound in my arm was in a bad way: my arm was swollen, it was like a drum. They wanted to cut it off at the shoulder, the doctors who had put me in Nauplia[1] to look after me. Thirty days and nights I never closed an eye. They prepared me for death, and the doctor brought all his tools to cut it off.

I seized my scimitar, and he threw himself down the stairs and escaped; he saw I would have done for him. And I got up and went to Athens to the doctor, and he cured me. Nonetheless I was crippled by those doctors at Nauplia; the bones went wrong. And if I hadn't gone to Athens, I was done for.

I went to Headquarters and told them I am going to disband my force and enter the regulars as a simple soldier; (they had made me a general). I told them: 'Without regulars our country is making no headway, and I'm going into that.' They tried hard, they couldn't keep me. I threw away my rank and disbanded my force. I took some of my officers with me to Athens, where Fabvier was, to be trained as a simple soldier. Gouras hears about this, he wants to join the regulars too—first they must pay him all the pay and everything they owe him from the past, £40,000. They promised, and he joined. But he did it to get the money, and only after that to do his duty.

[1] A port in the Peloponnese, and the first free capital of Greece

I went to Athens. They made me a wooden rifle, because the wound in my arm was still active and I did my training with the soldiers and they gave me an instructor privately as well. Gouras joined later and did his training too; and many others joined after us, and the Corps grew to about 5,000. Commander of the Corps was that gallant friend of Greece, the Frenchman Fabvier, and many other gallant French officers with him, and Greeks from abroad. Our country owes gratitude to all those generous benefactors of ours and above all to the gallant French, who took pains and trouble and strove to train us in good order and discipline.

We heard of preparations by Kiutayhé against Athens. Poor Fabvier tells the Athenians to let him take charge on his own, setting all the regulars to work to cut off Phaleron[1] by itself; and the Athenians not to run off to the islands, to stay on their native land, and Athens not to be sold into slavery again. When Gouras heard this it was the death of him, it was the end of his trade and his colleagues'; the citadel of Athens, the milch-cow of Gouras and all his gang! That's what consumes the money, the treasury of Eastern Greece, everything that came in! To prevent this disaster, the cutting off of Piraeus,[1] they all fought Fabvier; and he took the regulars and went to Methana,[2] to an isolated, unhealthy spot, and there he built a fort and houses. And the place being unhealthy, the men were wiped out and killed off to no purpose; and of all the equipment, the guns, the clothing and other necessities of war, which could have doubled the regulars, not a thing was left. And were all of it not lost, the Turks would never have retaken Athens, to sell it back to us again; and men without a fight or a sacrifice to get land at a shilling an acre, unploughed land and good, and to set us to work it for them like slaves, and the plough turning up the bones of our brothers and kinsmen! Thus were we set free from the Turks, and enslaved to wicked men that were the scum of Europe!

Kiutayhé came with a great force of men, with cavalry, with guns, with all the necessities of war. He seized Patissia.[3] Most of the villages of Athens submitted to them, for they found many of the villagers weighed down with stones for our justice, and they relieved them, and others they set free that we were teaching a lesson for having money. When they heard in Athens that Kiutayhé was coming, they sent for me to Fabvier, as I was under his command, and he gave me permission and I stayed behind while he went to Methana with the Corps. And they appointed me with two other Athenians. Symeon Zakharitzas and Neroutsos Benizelos, and we were with our men on the walls of the city; and we were fighting night and day for thirty-four days. Kiutayhé was battering down the walls with his guns and we were building them up; and we were wiped out in killed and wounded.

Early one morning, an hour to dawn, after he had battered down the walls of the city at many points and the ceaseless gunfire left us no chance to rebuild the walls, then the Turks came in. He made them drunk first with rum, and they came in from three directions; and all mixed up with the Turks, we went back fighting to the citadel.[4] On the front walls, the longer ones, we Athenians stood guard and with us that good and noble patriot Morphopoulos; from Boubounistra as far as the foot of the citadel was Mamouris with Gouras' men and villagers; from the Pillars, St. George's, to the foot of the citadel was Stathis Katzikoyiannis. All of them fought bravely, like patriots. Our country owes them gratitude. Gouras was on the Acropolis, and wherever need arose, when there was heavy fighting, he was on the spot. And in general everyone fought patriotically and bravely. The Turks had gun-positions all round the place, dug in, and they were attacking with guns, bombs and grenades, and with light arms: they a multitude and we few, up to five hundred men; less, not more; our positions extended.

We went to the fort. There was the disaster: women, children, animals. The Serpetzes was full. God's Providence, brother readers, is great and just. The Turks—every position taken all round the place and the citadel. Out went the

[1] The two ports of Athens, lying S.W. from the town
[2] On the coast of the Peloponnese, opposite Attica
[3] A northern suburb of Athens, at that time a village
[4] The Acropolis

men, women and children, crying, with ever so many animals, and the Turks never had a clue about them at all; and they all got away without so much as a nose-bleed, and went to Ambelaki and Koulouri.

We held the place thirty-four days. We occupied the citadel on August 3rd 1826. When we entered it there were a lot of cattle there. Gouras, who knew nothing about sieges, had them out and let them loose outside, and the Turks got them. I say to him: 'What are you doing, brother? There's a siege on.' He says: 'We shan't take long.' That's what he was told by the Europeans who visited the Acropolis, and he believed them. When we hadn't even bread, he was beating his head. The Turks ate the cattle and had Gouras' folly to thank for it.

I had learned my lesson in the citadel at Arta, where I had sat starving; and from Neokastro, where we hadn't even water. I stored my wife's family's wine and all their supplies; I bought sixteen hundred pounds of rice, lentils and everything that was needed; and I salted so many cattle and pigs. And all the men I had with me were fed, besides the wounded and the others when Kriezotis and the regulars came, when butter had reached 36s. a pound, and the same with other necessities, and they were not to be found.

When we took over the citadel, we shared out and each took his posts. Papa Costa, Morphopoulos and I to the Khrysospiliotissa,[1] where the cave is and the two columns above. We were wiped out in killed and wounded, because opposite were the Setzos and Kolonaki,[2] where the Turks' guns were. Inside the Serpetzes[3] were the Athenians, Neroutsos, Mitro Litzos and Davaris, as far as the outer gate of the citadel; on Odysseus' bastion, [4]from there down, were Gouras' men; on the bastion of the Lion, the Athenians, in a dangerous position. These poor fellows were naked and miserable, because Gouras' men had stripped them. And poor old Litzos and Anagnostis Davaris, with so many of his men, came to be killed with their villagers, and they brought all their cattle and the clothes from their houses, and they clothed and fed their own people, the wretched Athenians, who fought with them from the beginning in their country's trouble; and then like brothers they shared out what was their own.

Outside the Serpetzes, opposite the Setzos, was a brother-in-law of Gouras', Dendousis, a worthy patriot and brave. That was a dangerous position—he was killed. And they appointed me and I moved my men from the Khrysospiliotissa and we took over that position ourselves. Four paces distant and less were the Turks' dug-outs, deep trenches and wicker palisades on the parapets. I also had two bastions made, and we dug into the citadel and took our stand there. By night we made the bastions, and by day they destroyed them with the guns on the Setzos; for they were opposite and very near, and we were wiped out in killed. The same happened above on the Acropolis; for there were stones there, and the men were wiped out by the guns and bombs. The citadel above was full of graves, and we buried them in the Serpetzes.

So now the citadel seeks to consume those who were consuming it for so many years, and it feeding them like sheep; and they were killed daily. Gouras set to work on a splendid temple,[5] and covered it with earth on top to keep out bombs, and he put his family in it and stayed there himself. He took into the citadel his father-in-law, Stavris Vlakhos, and Karoris, Varelas and Zakharitzas, all his gang, his intimates, and he gave them a fine underground shelter. And he set them up as a Senate and put in Dionysus Sourmelis as their secretary, because he had written flattering Gouras when he was in the town with all that gang. He took them into the citadel, he put them in the basement; they eat and drink without any of them setting foot outside the door of the shelter. For outside there were bombs and grenades and guns, and every man was in danger, but in the basement there was safety; all except Nick Zakharitzas—he went out and fought, poor fellow, like other patriotic men, and he shared our dangers. The rest of them—all in the basement; and Gouras sat in the Erechtheum with his family. We went and got killed with the Turks outside the citadel; the Senate and Sourmelis wrote

[1]The SE. corner of the Acropolis [2]The Setzos (now called the Hill of the Muses, from which Morosini successfully bombarded the Parthenon in 1687) and Kolonaki (not to be confused with the fashionable quarter of modern Athens) both lay SW. of Makriyiannis' position [3]The area south of the Acropolis, between the theatre of Dionysus and the Odeum [4]Named after Odysseus Androutsos, first Greek military governor of Athens, murdered by Gouras [5]The Erechtheum

out to Headquarters, and to the commanders and the newspapers: 'Today our leader Gouras went out against the Turks and won this or that victory.' Every so often the ones in the basement wrote testimonials about the ones in the temple. We saw them written in the newspapers, because these were sent in to Anastasios Lidorikis and Vlakhos, Gouras' brother-in-law and father-in-law.

When we saw it, we got hold of them and had it out and I told them: 'Unless we see all the letters and all sign them, we're not sending another runner out of the citadel.' And so we continued from then on. Then I said to Gouras: 'You take a post outside the citadel, and then write about your exploits.' The brave fellow, he went out honourably and got killed, and they said that I killed him. May I never yield up my soul to God if that was what I was after, or the idea ever came to me! Later the gun-fire destroyed that famous temple, and Gouras' family was lost, and so many other souls. Out of all of them one innocent child escaped alive, and the others were all killed.

At Odysseus' bastion and from there out to the bastion of the Lion we had a mine fixed. We had put in gunpowder, and we had the fuse from there into the trench; and that position of the Lion the Athenians were guarding, without equipment. At their head was Danilis, a brave man and an honourable patriot. (The Turks caught him alive later, and Mitros Lekas with him, both good patriots, and they impaled them at Evripos.) The fuse was of cotton. The men used to make water in the trench because they couldn't go anywhere else, because the Turks were shooting from Karasoui and other places, and killing them every day. The Turks decided to make an assault on this point, and in the bastion where the mine was fixed a lot of them were assembled. We put our men in ranks; some of us went and took our stand with knives in our hands. We set fire to the fuse; it was wet and didn't catch; the flame went some distance and went out.

Then did I see an outburst of patriotism! An Athenian takes the flame in his hand, and went and thrust it on the fuse—for his country he carried the fire as if it were water; but it didn't catch. The Turks were shooting right on us; we gave them a good drubbing and sent them flying to the edge of the houses; and we failed with the mine, which would have wiped them out. We killed some of them, and an important one among them; Kiutayhé was very sad about him, for he was very brave. (When we were holding the town, I had gone out of the town walls one day with about ten men, and their cavalry attacked us and we would have been lost. We held out and killed their leader and another one, and the Turks went cold; and we found our opportunity and escaped; and that one too Kiutayhé lamented, because he was a great favourite of his.)

When we occupied the citadel, we also held the Plaka[1] quarter as far as the Albanian gate. Below the citadel in the houses there was a church, and there a mine was fixed by Costa the Mine-sapper of immortal memory, a brave and honourable patriot—both with his art and with his rifle he fought like a lion for his country. We were together and we fought like brothers, night and day. And we worked with our men, those good Athenians, and we laid our mines; and we were all devoted to each other, and always united.

At Mesolonghi and everywhere else this brave man had worked wonders. My country, you owe this warrior much! Kiutayhé offers him fortunes to change sides; for you, my country, he spurns them all. He set a mine in the church. A lot of Turks surprised us; we began the fight; we pretended to be beaten. (We wanted to abandon the Plaka to them, because we were few and the positions extended.) Then the Turks came to close quarters with us. We had occupied the Khrysospiliotissa and the foot of the citadel; we had entrenchments, and we held there. When the church was full and overflowing, two gallant heroes stood there, Michael Kounelis of Athens and Thomas of Argyrokastro or Khormovo, those two brave and deathless men, and they set fire; and they fought courageously, and they escaped. And the church went up into the air, and all the Turks with it.

[1]The quarter adjoining the Acropolis on its NE. side

A Battle near Athens

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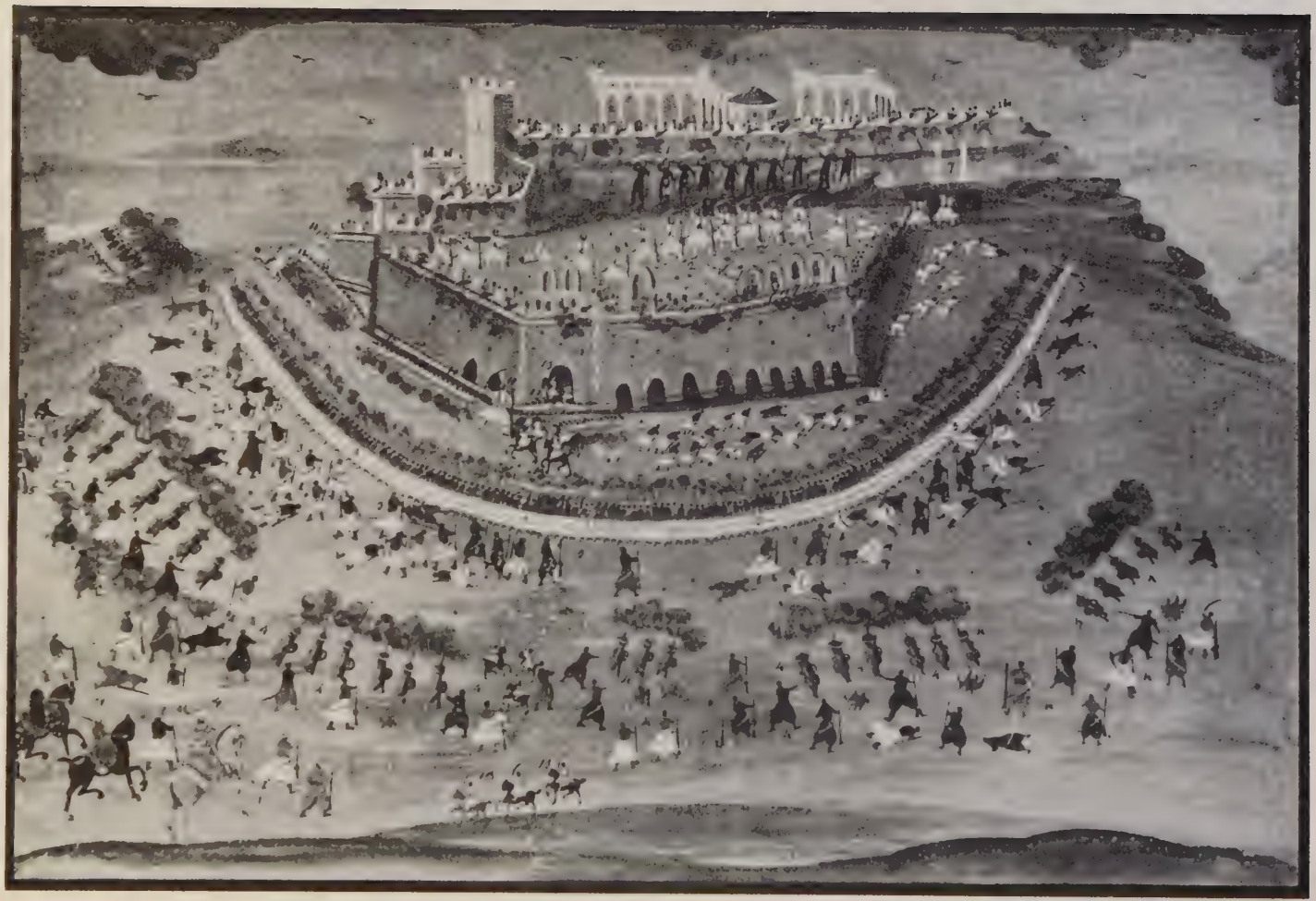

The Siege of the Acropolis

These paintings are two of a series made by Panayiotis Zographos on the instructions, and under the personal direction of Makriyiannis

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Outside the Serpetzes, where we were on guard, the Turks advanced their mines against us; there were three ways out of the citadel there. The Turks were very near us, and a young Pasha came up with a good force. And they came into their trenches very near us, and they were insulting us and calling us Jews; and at Mesolonghi they had been heroes and we were good-for-nothings; and in a day or two they're going to encircle us with their trenches, and then they're going to take us alive and bury their swords in us. I and Costa the Mine-sapper were worn out, because we were making mines night and day to destroy the Turks' own mines; and I was always the one to collect the Athenians—I loved them, and they the same—and to lead them to the mines to work. I had all the little family-men with me, and I protected them from the cannibals who wanted to strip them as they had on the citadel, anything they had left, to take that off them too.

As we were tired, all night and day that we had worked, I gave the word and they killed an ox I had kept alive, to give the men a little meat; and they cooked it for us to eat. Then I called the Mine-sapper and Kriezotis' brother, the priest, who was in there and on guard with Stathis Katzikoyiannis on the same stretch of the Serpetzes' wall, and we outside. I had also called Papacosta, a gallant fellow, a good patriot, a relative of Gouras. (With Gouras I was on bad terms, with Papacosta I was close friends, because he knew who was in the wrong and who was right.) At the place where we were all eating bread, the Turks outside in the night were insulting us. I had my band with me where we were eating, all together with our guests.

I say to them: 'Brothers, here I have your rations that you eat, wine, *raki* and all your needs. The rest of the citadel are eating dry bread. Well, for us to be eating and the Turks insulting us is not to be borne. I want the Turkish palisades off their trenches!'

The brave fellows reply—they were all small family-men from Athens, and a few Thebans that I always had with me; after I had made them this speech, all of them full of pride and patriotism—(we had never before gone out against the Turkish trenches, this was the first time)—they reply: 'Give us another round of wine to drink, with your own hand.'

I gave it them. They said to me: 'Give us your blessing, too.'

I said: 'You have first of all the blessing of God, the leader of all, and of our country.'

They all rose up and go out against the Turks, to their trenches, and they beat them; and they killed five or six Turks and took some of their palisades. The Turks retreated before them. Then that was not good enough; it was their first attack; and once you take courage, you take it for ever.

They say: 'You come out too, Captain.'

I am fond of my life; but my pride was touched, because I was responsible for telling them to do it. So I went out along with them, and we beat the Turks. A little later they came at us with knives and sent us chasing back to our position; they even wounded one or two of us. We give them another beating; they gave way before us. At the place we beat them, we took some booty, and among it we took a long cloak. I had a man with me, Katzikoyiannis' secretary, Alexandris his name was, a young family-man, a proud boy with brains and courage. I say to him: 'What I'm about to do, you back it up for sure; I'm going to try a stratagem.'

'Whatever you say, I'll do,' the boy replies.

I fill the Turkish cloak with earth, and the two of us take it and go to our posts, where our comrades are, chased back by the Turks; and I call the Mine-sapper and Kriezotis' brother, the priest, and Papacosta, and I call out so that the Greeks can hear me. I call their three names: 'Come and I'll give the three of you the Turks' loot to guard for me, the three of you, and I'll go and get the rest that's still there. Stand back while I seal it up first, so you won't rob me of it.'

I took my garter off my leg and fastened it, and I got out my seal to seal it up, and I had Alexandris look for some wax. Hearing of money and seals, the Greeks got out their knives and hurled themselves on the Turks like lions. True, they got loot; they took rifles, they took swords, they killed ever so many Turks; we

captured the three mines they were advancing against us to destroy us and the citadel with us; we took about twenty-five prisoners alive, the sappers and others, and the coffee they had with them and all their equipment, wine and *raki* in abundance. We went chasing after them as far as Karasoui: there was a large force of Turks there, and their entrenchments, and they held. From Karasoui back to our positions we destroyed all their trenches, and we took about two thousand of their palisades.

We held the place with Gouras, Papacostas, and that brave good patriot, Thomas of Argyrocastro. All together we held off the Turks in the fighting, and the Mine-sapper made the Turks' three mines into one and joined it onto ours; and we carried it on and attached it to a Turkish mine under a post of theirs, where there was a sort of *piazza*, and all the Turks used to gather there and talk and drink coffee; underneath there we filled it with gunpowder, without the Turks noticing anything.

We collected all the palisades and organised the position, my two bastions and wherever else was needed. I had one lad of mine killed then, there were few like him, Stamos Thodoris, the son of Peter, from Athens; I had him as standard-bearer, a very worthy man, good and brave. After we had driven off the Turks, he attacked at Karasoui, and they killed him and Prapas, Pagonas' brother. They were mourned by all the citadel; and I was bitterly sad, because I had had him with me so many years.[1]

The Turks set to work and made their trenches, and they carried them up to their post, where we had hidden the gunpowder. Then the troops collected at my post and we engaged the Turks in friendly conversation, to collect a number of them together and get the lot when we set fire to the mine. Our men formed a line; I gave them a bottle of rum between ten. One of them, I gave him the rum, he didn't give his companions any to drink, because he was a rogue, he drank it all himself and got drunk. When we were ready, and the Turks, the place was full of them and at that moment we should have wiped them all out by firing the fuse . . .

In mines, they make holes to let the air in. By ill luck, at that hole the gun-powder had run out. The fire reaching that point, the gun-powder there took fire. We knew nothing about mines; we thought this fire was the mine. The drunk fellow drew his knife and set up a yell. The Turks got wind of it. We moved out in disorder; the Turks retreated from the place. Then we rushed on to them and nearly brought on ourselves what we had prepared for the Turks. God did his will, and it went off before we were close, and sent up a shower of stones into the air; and none of us was injured, nor were the Turks.

Then the Turks attacked us with knives and set upon us; and there began a rain of small-arms fire from the Turks, and bombs and guns and grenades. Some of us were wounded, and I lost a young Athenian, a married man, Nestor Kopidis they called him, my standard-bearer's comrade, a very brave man. We were in a bad way then; the Turks were driving us right out and they could shoot at us even inside the citadel.

Then God gives me light, and I take a lighted torch in my hand and shout: 'Set fire to the great mine, now the Turks are on us, and we'll wipe out the lot!'

The Turks hear, they see the flame, they fight their way back; and the deathless Greeks close with them, and they get a splendid taste of the sword. We routed them back to their trenches; we took ever so many heads and a lot of booty, rifles, swords, great-coats; nor had we another mine, nor fire to light it.

From then on the Turks learned their lesson. They neither insulted us nor came near us. We had taken the wind out of their sails. Five or ten Greeks would go out and wipe them out. I had one brave fellow, Hadji Meletis by name, from Athens; every time he went out he would bring back a head or two to the post; a gallant and worthy fellow. The Turks advanced a mine against us under the citadel; and we offered him five hundred pounds, and we hung him by himself from the citadel and he saw this mine; and so the citadel was saved. (We let the air in from above.) And he was nearly done for when such a large force of Turks surprised

[1] Nevertheless this is the first and only time that Makriyiannis mentions him in his whole work

him; and we never paid him a halfpenny. (Later I presented him to Agostino Capodistria and Viaros[1]: 'There's nothing in the treasury!' There is for their spies, though, to pay them great sums for finding out what every married man is doing in his home.)

When I shared out the rum to the men for the sortie on the mine, there was an officer of Gouras' there, a great favourite of his. He made such a lot of money out of Gouras, they call him Johnny Patchwork —damn him and damn him and damn him, that he has him patched and plugged, the damned curse of his country! This villain with some of his gang, while we were in action and being cut to pieces with the Turks, took his gang and they ran away and went to Koulouri; and they went into action with the bawdy women, and they left their post empty in the face of the Turks, just above my post. Then the wretched Gouras—(I was on very bad terms with him on account of those treacherous fellows he had round him, they and that Athenian gang of his, and they gave him wicked advice; and in him they ruined a gallant fighter, and for that reason I passed no judgment on him)—and then he came to my post in distress, and my soul was bitter when I saw him thus.

He complained much to me. I said to him: 'Brother, from this day on, know me as we were before and better still. I am fighting,' I said, 'night and day, as you see. And as long as we are here, I am your brother. When this war is over, I don't want your friendship.' (He had been my best man.)

He says to me: 'I have had you as a brother so many years; I made you one of my family. Why don't you want my friendship?'

'Because,' I reply, 'I told you when we came to Athens not to look to get rich, because it will be to your dishonour and Athens will be endangered on your account; for you're not a small man to do her small damage. Why should I want it now? You got rich and you robbed Athens, stripping her bare. These villains you have with you, in August we took occupation of the fort and in the same month they tried to desert you, to run away, as you saw them. We're getting killed with the Turks, and Patchwork and the others got up and ran. And they put you across the Athenians and made you their enemy because they stripped them. These men are cowards, butcher's dogs. What d'you want the money for, all that you've made and filled so many tins and buried them away? Weren't you paying men to have for yourself, to earn yourself glory and serve your country?—not to press you to run away within a month! The cheating rogues have put suspicions into your head that I'm plotting to kill you on account of Odysseus, because you killed him. Brother, that was a wrong thing to have done to your benefactor, and to come from you. Now it's done. Remember all I said to you at Agoriani; that they'll set us to kill one another. You listened to me then, you didn't do it; later you did it. But now you must recognise your friends and your deceivers. It isn't only money makes a man rich; it's his good deeds.'

The poor fellow's eyes were filled with tears. His conscience smote him for the deed he had done Odysseus. He says to me: 'If I live and come through, I don't want to hear another word from those criminals. And the money,' he said to me, 'I'm engaged on making my will, and I'll found schools and other good works for our country. And I'll leave all of you your share.'

'Live to enjoy it, brother, and do good to your country, to wipe out this stain on you, that everyone who knows you grieves for. I don't want anything from you. And if you listen to me in future, telling you whatever comes into my head, we are brothers and friends as we used to be; if not, each minds his own business. And I want nothing to do with those friends of yours, because I know what they have done to you and our country. And the ones you have in here in your Senate—outside they're digging a mine for you, with the rest of the liars.'

'I know it all,' he said to me. 'They've all tied me up in knots. But now the question doesn't arise any more.'

We embraced and swore in future to be better than before. When we had agreed, his wife heard about it and his family; they

[1] The two brothers of Count John Capodistria, the first Governor of Greece after its liberation from Turkish rule

rejoiced. I went and saw them in the Erechtheum.

We agreed that they should come with Papacosta and Katzikoyiannis in the evening to eat bread at my post; I had fresh bread, and meat and so on. Poor Katzikoyiannis was in distress. So many of his family had been killed, and a nephew of his just at that time. It was Katzikostathis, a good patriot and a good man. And all these relations of his had been killed in the citadel.

While we were getting the food ready, all Gouras' gang are telling Gouras they will run away, like Patchwork did. Then the wretched Gouras became bitter. I say to him: 'Don't be bitter. Give us eight days' grace and let's write to Headquarters to send fresh men; and for the days this lot will stay, they can help us prepare mines round the Serpetzes and at all the gates of the citadel and anywhere else they may be needed. And we'll work and put mines everywhere and get them ready at every point, because they need a lot of work. Let's keep the men for that; and at the same time we'll write to the Government to send us a fresh garrison. And let's tell these men who want to leave to write a report for us to send to the Government, and in eight days we'll get a reply whether the Government is sending fresh men or not; then this lot can go. If reinforcements come, we don't need the mines; if not and they don't come, we shall be very few left and we shall be confined to the Serpetzes. And when the Turks come and we can't hold out, we'll light up and send up the Serpetzes into the air and the Turks there with it. And in this way we'll withdraw fighting into the temple[1]; and there we'll have a general mine and all go up into the air, we and the Turks and the temple. Because if the Government doesn't send us reinforcements—they won't want to come—shall we give up the Acropolis without a struggle after a month and a half of fighting? And how shall we live for shame before the world, and you above all, after telling all the foreign tourists and the local people that you'll fight on the citadel for two or three years?'

My observation pleased him and we told his men all about it, that we were all to work to prepare the mines. And accordingly we wrote the letters to the Government and we waited for the moon to set before I sent out the runner to the Government (because they left from my post). Poor Gouras was distressed about his ungrateful gang, who wanted to save their lives at the risk of their country and their leader; and at the good things of the citadel they were gallant and dauntless, and they sucked dry the wretched people of Athens. When I saw his distress I spoke to some of the important Athenians, and they went and told him: 'Don't be bitter at these men wanting to leave. We're defending this citadel, we who took it from the Turks. And now we shall not surrender it to them till they have killed us all.'

Then sat down Gouras and the others and we ate bread; we sang and made merry. Gouras and Papacosta asked me to sing; for it was a long time since we had sung—so long a time, while selfish men set us quarrelling, to carry out their evil ends. I could sing well. I sing a song then:

'The Sun had set—
Had set, my Son of Greece—
And the Moon vanished,
And the clear Day-star that moveth near the Bear—
These four were talking and secretly they talk.

The Sun turns and says to them, turns and laments to them:
"Last night as I set behind a low ridge
I heard women's tears and the lamentation of men
For those brave bodies outstretched on the field;
And in the thick blood are they all drenched.
For their country they have gone to the other world, the lamented." '

Black Gouras sighed and says to me: 'Brother Makriyiannis, may God bring it right; never before did you sing so sadly! This song—may it fall out right for us!'

'I was in the mood,' I said. 'It was so long since we sang.' (For in camp we had always been merry.)

The fighting began and heavy fire broke out. I took my men and went where I had been posted, and I stayed for a time and

[1] The Parthenon. It escaped this fate, but nearly succumbed to a still worse fate a few years later, when it was suggested that the Greek Royal Palace should be built on the Acropolis, using half the Parthenon as its portico

we fought. I made a tour of the posts outside. I went back to my post as the moon was beginning to set, to send out the runner to the Government.

They come tell me: 'Hurry, Gouras has been killed at his post. He fired at the Turks, and at the instant of fire they hit him in the brain, and he said not a word.'

I went. We took him on our shoulders and carried him to a cell. His family dressed him; and we buried him.

Then we all assembled and I made a speech to his ungrateful men, and I told them it was because of them he was killed, because they left their posts and he went alone: 'and you were pressing at every moment to let you go.' The people under siege appointed a committee of his wife, Papacosta, Katzikoyiannis, Morphopoulos and myself, to keep order until the Government sent reinforcements. I wrote to the Government about the death of Gouras, and we sent the other letters. Gouras was killed at the beginning of October, at the upper gate, outside the citadel.

Makriyiannis left Athens, under orders to report to the Government, on 29 November 1826. The Acropolis continued to withstand the siege until its capitulation was negotiated on 5 June 1827. It was only a matter of months then before the battle of Navarino brought the Greek War of Independence to a successful end; but that is another story.

BEAUTY

HARDIMAN SCOTT

Remember Thomas on the Shoulder o' Mutton,
In the misting vale found his rest, and gave himself
To the dusk air and found beauty, beauty was there.
If we change tenses, change places and change the self,
It is still the same beauty that inhabits air.
Yes, and the same beauty still that creates you here.

Frost may pinch off the leaves with a hundred skies fixed
In their parchment, read by the winds and cast away
To wrinkle old into the earth their slow decay,
Petals damask no more like scurf scale to the ground,
And maid walk unwitting into the crinkled crone,
But not the beauty, beauty's face has changed alone.

Thus the beauty of your face, although it is drawn
By changing things, by light's soft pencillings, by air
Its touch upon the crest of hair, upon the cheek
Its flush of lips, and nothing still the moment here,
What informs it is unalterable and meek,
The final beauty and the symbol that I seek.

You become the symbol then, the knowledge of all
Lovers, those who have loved and truly loved, become
Love's beauty, and in my own life that image clear
Through which all living's done, in which all truth finds home,
And I, breathing within this beauty's atmosphere,
Can offer now, always, only my love as prayer.

ITALIAN JOURNEY

BERNARD WALL

ROME is the capital of the poorest of the Parliamentary countries in Europe. Where does its appearance of fabulous prosperity come from? Some people think the luxury comes from the Vatican. True enough, there are milling pilgrims from Italy and from all over the world, and a Papal audience in the Piazza San Pietro holds up all traffic on the far bank of the Tiber. But pilgrims, even those from the hard currency countries, have relatively little to spend. There are two Corps of Diplomats, twice as many as in any other capital—they are accredited respectively to the Papacy and the Republic. But there are hardly any industries in Rome, and the campagna outside the city is as melancholy and abandoned to its grass and tombs as ever. What do the Romans—now over two millions—do for a living?

In so far as there is an answer to this, it lies in the social formation of the city itself. There were only about 2,000,000 people in the Rome of the Popes, but the population began to swell immediately after 1870. The whole apparatus of Government came here—Parliament, the various Ministries, the civil and military services and their numberless hangers-on. All the great industries and banks and insurance agencies opened offices in Rome, not necessarily to work in—the essential work is done in Milan, Turin or Genoa—but to have a window open on the capital.

It must be hard to travel far in Italy without hearing the word *combinazione*—it is one of those words that are so specifically Italian (*imbroglio* is another) that they are almost untranslatable. A *combinazione* means a kind of arrangement between persons for their mutual profit or survival. There are many different kinds of *combinazioni*, but they nearly all involve an exchange of services, and usually the pulling of strings. For instance, A, who lives in Sicily, will look after B's mother in Palermo on condition that B—a Sicilian in Rome—finds a job for A's nephew in D's office. *Combinazioni* could not be worked easily in a country such as England or with people who have the English temperament. To reach the grand Italian scale you need large families and intense family loyalty, friendships that are close and have no shred of reticence or hypocrisy, and finally an ingrained distrust of the machinery of state and of governments. Rome is the nerve centre of all Italian *combinazioni*. People flock from all over Italy to *combinare* their affairs. To *combinare* on the highest level, presence in Rome is imperative.

And as the years pass, Rome is becoming more and more manifestly the social capital of Italy. Life is more agreeable there than in Milan, which is dirty and busy, or Turin, which is stiff and dull. Venice and Florence are too small or else too particularised. So the rich gravitate more and more to Rome—landowners from the South, the heirs of great industries from the North. There is more pleasure in Rome than anywhere else; there are more diversions (though by the Concordat with the Vatican the development of night clubs is restricted), and there are more people with money and leisure to join in the fun. The Roman aristocracy is pleasure-loving in an eminent degree. Hence Roman society carries on its reckless life, with love affairs, American jazz, Scotch whisky and gambling, and there is no real link between the life of the people in the Via Veneto and the Italian masses.

I am astonished at the growth of American influence in Italy since the war. The United states has a special prestige owing to Italian emigration—it is the land paved with gold. The American attitude during the last elections, combined with that of

the Papacy, did much to weaken the Communists and left-wing Socialists and to strengthen the Christian Democrats. But a certain spiritual dependence on the United States raises curious cultural problems. On the autostradas the interminable advertisements are of a flamboyant American type. Films and light literature are the main channels for spreading knowledge of the American way of life, though not in the most felicitous ways, or with unchallengeable effects. The numerous illustrated children's magazines seem based on American strip cartoons. The heroes are Tarzan-like and even have English names, the heroines who are rescued from evil scientists are blondes and cuties. In Venice I observed that one of the most ancient traditions of the city—by which gondolas are always painted black—had been broken in the interests of advertising Coca Cola. A gondola emphasising the advantages of that beverage was piloted through the Grand Canal. It is as though the Beefeaters of the Tower of London were hired to carry advertisements as sandwich men. Advertisements have spread like mushrooms in Italy since the war, blighting the glorious mountains and seascapes. It is rather like one of those South American countries where the latest gadgets from the United States are being used in villages inhabited by blanketed Indian peons.

It would be quite absurd, of course, to apply this simile to the industrial North, yet to some extent I feel it applies in Rome. Many architectural changes were made for the Anno Santo. The via della Conciliazione, which leads up to the square of St. Peter's, was adorned with rows of obelisks carrying arc lights. There were vast hostels for pilgrims. But the most remarkable and confusing change of all has been operated on the main railway station. The old peach-coloured building by the Piazza Esedra has disappeared, engulfed in an immense edifice of concrete and glass, with hollow halls as large as several London stations put together. The building dwarfs the restricted rail traffic that uses it. Moreover, in style it is what we used to think of as 'typically Fascist' architecture—showy rather than adequate to its ends, hence rhetorical. Why was it built? To welcome pilgrims for the Anno Santo. It could have been spared until the poor in Italy have better houses, and large families are no longer cramped together in a couple of rooms with scarcely any furniture. (In Trastevere, even, just across the Tiber, there are people living like that.) But Italians like huge architecture and as they live in the streets and piazzas, these count as part of their houses.

The contrast is even more marked a little out of Rome, in the campagna, where the villages are incomparably more primitive and poor than those of Lombardy or Piedmont.

This is not easy to grasp if we visit only the towns of the Alban hills or Tivoli, for, though deplorably war-scarred, those regions are dotted with townsmen's villas. But it was brought home to me anew when I spent several days with friends in the village of Sant' Oreste on the shoulder of Monte Soratte—Horace's Soracte. Sant' Oreste is typical of the old campagna. It has a thousand or two inhabitants, but as it has no amenities to attract pleasure-lovers, it has remained off any beaten track. There is one palace architected by the Baroque master, Vignola. The village church is undistinguished, though astonishing inside owing to the elaborate Baroque draperies that muffle its walls. Three miles away, on the very summit of Soracte, is a shrine of San Silvestro the hermit—the stone on which he is said to have slept is enclosed in the crypt. From the summit of San Silvestro's chapel there is a magnificent view—knotty mountains as far as Lake Bracciano and also the Tiber curling through the Roman plain. Near the chapel of San Silvestro is a monastery with three monks.

Communications between Sant' Oreste and the outside world—Rome is some thirty miles away—depend on a ramshackle *corriera*, or autobus, down to the railway station in the plain, and then a slow and crowded train. The village streets are stone-paved canyons between the stone walls of the houses. The normal beast of burden is the ass. There is electric light, but the water supply needs improving. The peasants' houses are like cramped caves. They sit five or six in a sitting-room

ten feet by ten, and numbers share sleeping places. The family capital in the poorer houses consists of two or three chairs, a table, a few dishes and pans, a picture of the Sacro Cuore, perhaps a faded photograph, the hens that peck about on the floor and the goat in his stall. Food is scarce for men and beasts. The cooking is done on charcoal.

Many villagers of the older generation are snobbish about reading and writing. They do not like to admit that they cannot read; they say their eyes are not good. The schooling given to the children is elementary and spasmodic—many children do not attend school regularly as their parents need them for work. The peasants speak a variant of the Roman dialect, their gestures are grave and stiff and they have the stance of trees. They have little idea of geography and many of them have never been to Rome—several women, when introduced to city life by a friend of mine, were terrified and fell ill.

The great religious and ideological warfare of today has repercussions in this village, though in confused ways. From time to time the peasants make pilgrimages up to the monastery—peasants' pilgrimages are gay occasions for there is riotous singing and plenty of strong drink. The pilgrimage seems officially to be in honour of San Silvestro's miracles, but some of the peasants suspect there is a holy snake in the monastery. The truth is, I believe, that the monks keep a serpent pickled in alcohol as a curiosity. They themselves are in no way responsible for any claim that it is holy. Here, as so frequently around Rome and in southern Italy, Christianity is mingled with old legends that go back to the Roman Empire, and paganism has never really died out.

But if Catholicism is not clearly disentangled from holy snakes or superstitions about the evil eye, Communism, which has also made inroads here, takes forms that the Dialectical Stalinists would hardly consider orthodox. I met an *Americano* (that is, an Italian villager who has spent some time in the United States) who professed Communist sympathies. He impressed and terrified some of the peasants not by his political views but because he held spiritualistic and hypnotic séances in his house. Nearly everybody in the village shudders at practices such as table-turning; at bravest they give a nervous titter when you mention *stregoneria* or witchcraft. Yet their terror is mingled with fascination. At the séance I witnessed scenes of wild hysteria, and I particularly remember a young peasant girl screaming that she was damned in the presence of a police official who was good-tempered and found it all very amusing. In Italian villages the priests are generally the most efficient enemies of the wild superstitions that lie just below the surface of people's minds. When we remonstrated with our *Americano* and said he had a responsibility to do better for the peasants than this, he merely boasted of his cleverness and said: 'The peasants are stupid. They are ignorant. They think I can summon the demon and that gives me a sense of power.'

The most important fact that militates for Communism in Italy is poverty and starvation. But this has another cause besides the chronic maldistribution of wealth. Even if wealth were distributed amongst all sections of the population, and honestly —not with a big rake-off for middle-men and tax-gatherers as occurred under Fascism and would doubtless occur in a Stalinist totalitarian régime in Italy—the fact remains that there is not enough to go round. In the wildest regions south of Rome the population is growing faster than anywhere else. It has more than doubled in the last fifty years. The only possible solution would be a large-scale emigration to the empty spaces of the world. Italians would be prepared to colonise regions considered unsuitable by colonists of British extraction. But will the occupiers of empty spaces ever permit Italians to work for them?

There is still another telling argument that the partisans of Stalinism are able to use effectively in Italy. It is that from the military point of view, the point of view of force, the Russians hold the trump cards, at least for the time being. I have often been presented with the following argument: 'It pays to be thought to be a Stalinist. For, if war breaks out, Italy is one of the first

countries the Russians will invade. Whether they are ultimately defeated or not, they will occupy Italy quite long enough to have time to kill those thought to be anti-Communists and reward those thought to be Communists. Suppose that the Americans come to liberate us years afterwards. They will not be able to resurrect the corpses of those thought to be anti-Communist, and they will not kill those thought to be pro-Communist.'

This appeal to self-interest, in face of public force conceived as unscrupulous and a-moral in its very nature, is an old one. In its time it served the Fascists well, and it won over many of the politically indifferent to that private loathing and public acquiescence that was a common attitude towards the Nazis and the Axis. In Italy for centuries people have had to use their wits to escape the rapacity of foreign soldiers and policemen—and one way of doing this is by paying lip-service to whomever is in power at the moment. The Communist appeal to power is strengthened by the natural defencelessness; by the Peace Treaty the Italians are precluded from having an army large enough to put up even a show of resistance.

Here I believe we are touching on a special difficulty of Italy as a nation. The Italians are inclined to view the State as an oppressor about which one must always be on one's guard, and this extremely individualistic and anarchistic attitude to the State makes it hard to defend free institutions against oppressors who seize the machinery of the State. If enough people say: 'Nothing can be done about the political situation', then nothing can be done. And yet, if people say 'nothing can be done', this, as many Italian critics and historians have pointed out, is an inheritance from the disillusionments of the centuries. There is a vicious circle here. And it can easily be seen how pessimism and fatalism about public affairs can be used to excuse making hay while the sun shines, spending one's money on pleasures before the dark days when there will be no more money to spend.

In this context it is worth saying something about the reactions of Italian writers and artists.

I should begin by pointing out that writers have always been discontented with the state of Italy, and have been the worst propagandists for their country. On the other hand, they have often expressed the conscience of the public, and today their comment on the state of affairs is revealing.

Amongst writers and artists there are many different outlooks. But, broadly, they are either much less politically and socially conscious than English writers and artists, or else much more so. Many take no interest in the repercussions of world events, and their attitude reflects the predominant atmosphere in Italy, for, though fatalism about ultimate war and disaster is fairly general, one is less depressed by day-to-day events in Rome or Milan than in London (though the actual danger is greater). Many writers and artists pursue their work tranquilly through war and through peace, ony pausing to grumble occasionally at human folly in general. This attitude has a long tradition behind it, and it has been accompanied by much distinguished work.

But, with the overthrow of Fascism, another view of the function of the writer and the artist became ascendant—the restless one of *engagement*, which relates all art and writing to the revolutionary changes going on in society. The new movement found its expositors amongst men and women of a younger generation. Novelists such as Moravia, Vittorini, Pavese, Alvaro, Jovine (if I pick out five almost at random out of a long and distinguished list) can hardly be appreciated unless we are aware of the crisis in ideas and beliefs through which civilisation is passing.

After the fall of Fascism there were widespread hopes that a new era of social and moral reform had begun, and often these took extreme and Utopian forms. In the years immediately following the end of the war the intellectual atmosphere in Italy had curious resemblances with that in England in the thirties—when writers were busy going to meetings and signing manifestos about the Abyssinian and Spanish wars. At that time in Italy no clear distinction was made between the

idealistic demands for social justice and the aims of the Communist party. Moreover, 'literary' and 'artistic' Communism in Italy is often no more than a vague aspiration, with as little to do with historic reality as peasants' ideas of location have to do with geography.

Yet I think events have caused a noticeable decline of sympathy for Stalinism amongst Italian writers. The contemporary Stalinist policy has hardly encouraged those who visualised Communism in terms of peace and equality and the brotherhood of man. A few well-known personalities still have blind faith, such as Renato Guttuso, the painter. But Guttuso's position seems to an outsider as eccentric as that of his master, Picasso: these men, though gifted artists, are hardly impressive witnesses on matters of *Realpolitik*.

But the decline of Utopian hopes, has, I think, left a gap. Writers today, many of them, do not know what to think; they lack any positive axis, any standards by which values can be measured with confidence. This feature is more noticeable in contemporary Italy than in England. There are writers who profess Catholicism in Italy, but they are less significant than in England, not to mention France. Hence contemporary novels have a negative, bitter and destructive tone; in one way or another they attack what exists, though only on rare occasions do they imply solutions. They are at their best when they analyse the motives of a profiteering and irresponsible middle class. But their temper cannot be taken as reflecting the normal life of the common people, who are hardworking, generous and cheerful.

It cannot be repeated too often that the real Italian virtues are not public or social but private. The Italians even conceive freedom first and foremost as a private achievement, as the art of making one's life and that of one's relatives and friends fool-proof against public disasters. The Italian tradition of freedom is thus in one way almost the exact opposite of the English tradition, English freedom being more public and Parliamentary than personal. Indeed, freedom as expressed in the Italian tradition makes the operation of Parliamentary systems none too easy. Yet it would be a great mistake to underestimate the unconquerable vitality with which the Italians have clung to their individualistic and anarchic sense of freedom. The very political scepticism and lack of public spirit that enables power-men and bosses to seize the reins in Italy prevents them from ever realising their ambitions. Centuries of experience have taught the common people subtle ways of sabotaging the worst effects of tyranny.

One day recently when we were talking about the danger of a new war, an Italian writer expressed what I would like to take as a typical view. A new war, he thought, would come soon. But another foreign invasion would probably be much like the last. The invader with his new panaceas would in the end be defeated by Italy. Very few people would believe any promises he made because people never believe any promises made by authorities in power for very long. Citizens would take to the mountains or change their identities and domiciles as they did during the Nazi terror; the clean-shaven would grow beards; the bearded would become clean-shaven; the strong would go about with crutches and so on. The invader would be befuddled, and in the end Italian scepticism might disintegrate his fanaticism or morale. There would, of course, be partisan warfare, for which Italians are much better adapted than for resistance in large and anonymous masses. It would be idle for Italians to try to imitate Achilles—many of them, indeed, think of his type as dull and stupid. The true hero of the people of Italy is Ulysses. In a sense Ulysses was the first Italian.

Senor Gaya, a distinguished art critic and the Director of the Galerias Layetanas in Barcelona, writes the first article in a series on modern Spanish painters

BENJAMÍN PALENCIA

JUAN ANTONIO GAYA NUÑO

It was Federico García Lorca who, in Soria on a summer afternoon in 1932, introduced me to Benjamín Palencia. The meeting took place in front of a grocery and a shoemaker's shop, and the day was hot. I could add many more details because the whole afternoon remains engraved on my mind. It began with Lorca, short, stout, swarthy and passionate; it continued in the mediaeval streets of Soria, enlivened by students who, under his direction, were presenting in the town some *entremeses* by Cervantes and Lope de Rueda. It finished with Benjamín, then still fair like the Benjamin of the Bible, and without the grey hairs which now grow so thickly on his head. Federico García Lorca waved and gesticulated, acting each word and trying to illustrate every shade of thought. Benjamín Palencia, being more of a Celtiberian, was silent; his medium of expression was in the dramatic colours of Spain. At this time the arid countryside, the fish and the partridges, the mediaeval streets—either sun-scorched or gloomy, but always deserted—of Avila, Toledo and Soria, were all being impressed on his mind like an engraving.

Palencia is the youngest of the great Spanish masters; Spanish because that expresses his ability to compress and condense the essential qualities of the fierce, dry, African soil of Spain. There is a common denominator in the paintings of El Greco, Goya and even of Zuloaga and Solana. They cling to the fields and the crags with a desperate love for the parched and austere Castiles. This conception of Castile is elastic. It extends geographically from the limits of the Mancha—Palencia was born in Barrax, in the province of Albacete—to nearly as far as the Cantabrian coasts, in a diagonal thrust which includes Madrid. Palencia becomes each day more Castilian and more Spanish and seems to express with his brush his love for the arid land. Yet, compensating for the harsh reality, there is the divine splendour of the Castilian skies, provocatively blue and yellow, skies that before Palencia had only been captured by El Greco. No Spanish painter could have imagined such riches; no other would have been able to reproduce them with such incredible atmospheric clarity.

Palencia has always thought only of painting, of manipulating colours and creating forms. He has given up everything except painting. His ambitions appeared—and were already beginning to be fulfilled—at the age of eighteen, when he started painting, in tempera, glittering pictures of Madrid. The fantastically blue sky of Madrid, its dazzling stone and its splendid chromatic contrasts, were enough to make a Fauviste out of any artist, even if, as Palencia, he never knew the existence of such people as Dufy or Wlaminck. But then, had not El Greco been the first of the Fauvists? That was how Palencia began his intensely individual career. He was Spanish to the backbone, and from this temperament there sprang a great passion for realism, which was crystallised in truly noble portraits of anonymous workers—'The Book-binder', 'The Engraver', 'The Toy-maker'.[1] It was a way of getting to know those descendants of the Celtiberians and Moriscos he was later to meet over and over again in the fields. They always had for him an air of aristocracy that was thoroughly Velazquean.

Soon after, Palencia set out in search of the Spain whose fantastic beauty had been waiting so many centuries to be discovered. This beauty was within reach of all but no one had noticed it. Palencia has said of himself: 'I have run on like a hungry animal in search of living material for my pictures. My poetic sense was aroused by

Painted in 1919

Ninos di mi molino 1946

'I do not know how to draw and I do not want to, so I do as I please without troubling about what others call the art of drawing.'—Palencia

the sight of ancient bullet-holes, by great static rocks with their fossilised skeletons. So often I have wandered over the broom-covered highlands, trying to translate the plastic quality of their crags into the damp slopes of hot valleys, into the fiery brambles, the honeycombs of virgin wax and even the cry of the partridge.' This short confession is dated 1932, the year I met him in Soria. At that time then, although

he seemed isolated and asleep in the depths of Castile, he was discovering the secret of the soil and the rocks, the partridge and wood-cock, the secret of all the infinite shades and figures of central Spain. He knew more about a trout or a quail than any zoologist, and knew a ravine more thoroughly than any geologist. And, what is more important, he learned the true colours of things.

No painter of any epoch or country has had such an easy and magnificent apprenticeship. I cannot say how far the landscape and the training dominated his genius or his genius has dominated the landscape, but what is certain is that from that period dates his conception of a stark and schematic 'Iberianism'. He has absorbed the vitality of the land itself and transformed it into a vision. The land is revealed dehumanised, and the fields as deserted, as they are at dawn in the plains of Alamazán and Trijueque before the labourers arrive to start their work. They are populated only by the flocks of partridges which came up to him quietly and confidently. At this time he was not only something like St. Francis but also nearly a completely abstract painter. But there was nothing untrue in his paintings. To see that, you only have to look at the great stretches of fields in the plains of Guadalajara and Toledo; they seem to belong to some strange, deserted planet.

Palencia also turned his attention to the whitened skeletons of animals that had died of thirst, and there were always plenty of those to be found. But his art was not cruel. Like all the great Spanish painters, Palencia was strongly affected by love and suffering and death, and all the traces he found of these he turned, as it were, into relics. He painted the bones of a mule as if they were those of a saint, clean, pure and sacred.

The landscape of Benjamín Palencia is not examined scientifically, nor is it wrapped in the conventional mists of Catalonia. The earth is a grey-brown, with shades of light brown and yellow; the river, blue; the stones, white. There are hardly any trees, or even bushes, just stubble. Only the sky rectifies these crude colours, and it is usually a fantastic blue, with delicate wisps of white, but sometimes, towards evening, it irradiates flaming reds that touch the greyish earth and catch everything in their glow. Palencia, watching for this hour, realised that there existed two creatures which contained this iridescence in themselves—the partridge and the trout. These are the most pictorial creatures ever created since they contain every conceivable colour, placed on that grey background striven after by every artist. Furthermore, and this also pleased him, the grouse and the trout are feminine creatures, timid, retiring and succulent.

The nearer his models are to the land, the more they mingle with it and imitate it, the more Palencia loves them. This makes him love two very different aspects of humanity: children and cities. Country children are usually poorly dressed, with snivelling noses, and their simple expression often deceives us as to their intelligence; for these country children of Castile are the shrewdest in the world, with a certain similarity to the partridge and some of the astuteness of the trout. Palencia has published, at dates as far apart as 1923 and 1948, two volumes of drawings of children and has made numerous drawings of sheep-shearers, shepherds, farm-hands and cow-herds. These figures preserve a flavour of the highlands, rustic and individual, that can only be obtained by living a communal life with his models. By the side of Palencia's paintings the artificial portraits of unconvincing peasants by other artists are nothing more than laughable. Perhaps on account of his apparently rough sketching and his simple colouring, Benjamín Palencia is nearer to the country and the peasant than any Spanish artist since Zurbarán; the same parched, rustic atmosphere of the great painter of monks is revived in Palencia with an anti-urban accent, and a comprehension of high, limitless plains. The other day a collector explained to me his dislike of Palencia because he was a painter who could not be classified. I suggested that he should classify him as an Iberian painter, and if he did not like Iberian, purely and simply as a painter. If he had still not agreed, I should have suggested he should be called a gilder in the old Spanish sense, because in the same way as the old sculptors of images used to scrape the colours on their

From *Ninos di mi molino* 1947 (*Librairie Clan, Madrid*)

already gilded carvings, Palencia applies his heavy, turgid colours to a white background, the canvas, revealing the elemental construction of his ideas. I have seen many painters, some of them really famous, peering at one of Palencia's pictures in an endeavour to find out how he achieved such qualities of richness and relief.

So, in any case, he could just be classified as a painter; or as a painter of villages, countrysides and cities; as a spectator of the grey quadrilateral of the Escorial

surging up from a sea of green (a favourite subject of his), with both colours revealed with wonderful clarity in the mountain air. At other times he sees before him the steeply rising Toledo of El Greco, the whole city emerging in russet and ochre with an air of Moorish resignation, crowned by the Cathedral and the Alcázar. Finally, there is the Palencia who perceives the blue and red shadows of the walls of Avila. In these Castilian paintings Palencia is only Fauvist in his rough, inspired application of his best and purest colours. These he does not mix, making use instead of the taut background of his canvas. He usually paints with his fingers, and the landscape is transposed directly to the canvas, the only medium being the artist's own flesh. Benjamín's most wonderful and beautiful pictures have been painted in a single session. Furious, agitated and feverish, he loses all his usual placidity. Then the painting is finished, displaying some gorgeous Castilian yellows never even known by Van Gogh; Palencia, exhausted, has to look at his eternal model, the land, to convince himself the picture is not the work of an angel, a 'fiercely human angel'. When Blas de Otero's poems were published under this title, I immediately thought of Palencia—this other fierce angel, so fantastically human: an angel because he knows so intimately all the sanctuaries, all the silver ribbons of those Castilian hermitages which seem museums of little waxen images; an angel, too, because he adores Giotto 'that living inspiration of art', and because he can communicate an appearance of purity and virginity to objects not possessing it. In his studio there is one of his masterpieces, a great canvas showing only a violincello, an instrument long in use, created for pleasure, yet by his hand it assumes an angelic quality. It is painted in the most sublime violet, a colour used by only a few Venetians (Titian, Veronese and Tiepolo), by El Greco and also by Delacroix. Such great discoveries are made by artists in search of form and colour, but they also coincide with the discoveries of other great artists who also knew how they should be sought. A vein of gold may be found, but only when the miner knows where to look for it.

From *Ninos di mi molino* 1947
(*Librairie Clan, Madrid*)

And yet how easy it is for Palencia to find gold! He has only to watch oxen threshing corn to witness their personification; they are oxen belonging to an Egyptian religion, or out of some rock painting. Magnified by Benjamín in great chords of

rich colour, perhaps red or blue, they are absurd and glorious. Or he has only to go to the mountains, the rivers, the mill or even visit the merry-go-round where the children are playing. A painter does not need to dream in order to commit the sin or achieve the virtue of becoming abstract; on the contary, he must wake up, in the country, from the nightmare we call civilisation, with its drab, grey complexion.

So much for his colour. About his line, Palencia himself has said: 'I do not know how to draw and I do not want to, so I do as I please without troubling about what others call the art of drawing'; because if drawing is the action of the hand responding faithfully to the eye alone, without the influence of the heart, Benjamín believes that such an artist is not only bad but criminally so. He thinks one must approach things with a heart that is pantheistic and candid. Therefore, what is of importance in this kind of painting is the synthesised essence of the subject, both in line and colour. Palencia is able to humanise or dehumanise at will, always with that plastic result he achieves when his models are the true, essential ones he normally uses. So authentic are they that they make you wonder whether the secret of the painting does not lie entirely in the selection of the model. But the secret is a synthesis of the essential and the eternal, an innate discipline, a fresh, light touch, and the fierceness and fanaticism of a man who is certain of the truth.

This is the way Benjamín Palencia paints, and he teaches his pupils to do the same. They are pupils voluntarily because he does not like to be called 'maestro'; he only wants to be a friend and a companion. After our Civil War he gathered together some boys and took them to Vallecas, where the city of Madrid comes to an abrupt end and the country begins. It is a southern countryside, high, bare and rough. It was a strange spot to choose while the school of San Fernando still sends its students to the Paular, though often with appalling results. In Vallecas Benjamín and his boys improvised a studio in a derelict building, the roof of which was falling in on them. There they came in contact with reality, and built out of huge stones monuments to the great painters. A few years later his pupils emerged, painters in their own right and with a reputation—for instance, Francisco San José, Alvaro Delgado and Luis García Ochoa.

Then Palencia discovered his mill, hidden away in the hills near Avila. It is the centre of the world with its rocky ground and furrowed fields, its rivers, bulls and horses, with its fishes and birds. Every summer Benjamín goes to his mill—a visit well known to the children for whom he brings a load of clothing and toys. He lives on hares and fish, honey and cheese. He isolates himself from that other world where dozens of unhappy painters squabble for a first or second award in the National Exhibitions. He shows his paintings to the labourers and millers, wiser critics than many professional ones. Then, a month and a half later, a new Benjamín Palencia (he is always new, always refreshed by new models) astonishes his friends with thirty or forty canvases, the paint still fresh on them, with no other varnish than that of the pure air of the Meseta.

Benjamín Palencia is now fifty years old. He has been the friend of Maruja Mallo and the sculptor Alberto, with whom he has wandered through the Castiles. He has collaborated with the great Torres García, and was the friend and companion of Federico García Lorca. He has exhibited—with immense success—in Cairo, Venice, Pittsburgh and Buenos Aires, and won a medal in the National Exhibition for his 'View of Toledo'. Apart from an extensive and detailed bibliography, there have been monographs on him by Ramón Faraldo and Abel Bonnard. He could never live without music and books. The friend, as he is, of so many poets, he is himself a poet in colour, and on reading the *Bueyes y rosas dormían* of García Lorca, one imagines those pink and blue oxen of Benjamín. He gives the colouring of flowers to immensely solid animals with an inspiration that is extraordinarily poetic. He is benevolent and childlike, a friend of all children and flowers. Finally, with such a typically Castilian name—Palencia—he is the Benjamin of Castilian painting, with his windows opening on to the whole world.

Castilian Landscape *Oils, undated*

low Landscape *Oils, 1949*

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Avila *Oils, 1947*

Landscape *Oils, undated*

El Tajo desde la Virgen del Valle - Toledo 1941-1943

Boxers Executing the Japanese Chancellor — *from a contemporary Chinese print*

THE FIST OF RIGHTEOUS HARMONY

MAURICE COLLIS

EVERYBODY knows that in 1900 the European Legations in Peking were besieged by the Boxers who tried to massacre their inmates. But who exactly the Boxers were is not remembered so well; nor that they have a place in the train of events that went to the creation of modern China. In this article an attempt will first be made to sketch their origins and ideas; citations will follow showing how they appeared to the Chinese; and in conclusion they will be given their proper historical perspective.

The Chinese name for the Boxers is I-ho Ch'üan, which is generally translated Fist of Righteous Harmony. The word Fist had to do with the fact that they practised a sort of boxing which was partly ritualistic and partly athletic. It had, however, a wider significance when taken with the words Righteous Harmony, and hinted that their society aimed at displacing by violence an unrighteous by a righteous dispensation. In the long course of Chinese history there had been many bandit societies with similar aims. Thus, the bandit Li, who eventually overthrew the corrupt and decadent Ming, sacked Peking and declared himself Emperor (though his reign only lasted for one day), assumed at the beginning of his rebellion in 1643 the title of By Heaven's Grace, Grand Captain of Righteousness. Again, in 1832, a manure-gatherer, giving himself the title of The Immortal King, and to his lieutenant that of Lion of the Recumbent Buddha, planned to drive out the Manchus who, besides being themselves foreign, were unable to protect China against the inroads of foreigners from the West, particularly the English. And in the eighteen-fifties, Hung, the leader of the mystical Taiping rebels, styled himself The Heavenly King, as an intimation that the reigning Son of Heaven had lost Heaven's mandate. He conquered half China and might have succeeded in bringing the Manchu dynasty to an end, had it not been that the then Emperor, Hsien Feng, employed Western-trained troops under General Gordon, later of Khartoum, to defeat him.

The aim of these three leaders of bandit societies was, with Heaven's help, to terminate dynasties which had rightly become unpopular, and re-establish China in its pristine glory. The Boxers' aims were analogous. They saw the country going to ruin and believed that they had a divine mission to save it. It could only be saved by massacring the Western foreigners, who for seventy years had been nibbling bits off it.

It is difficult for modern Europeans to understand the Boxer rebels because their mentality, like that of their many predecessors, belongs to old rustic China. They were not nationalist politicians like the Irish rebels who succeeded in driving the English government out of Ireland. Nor were they actuated by an ideology comparable to that of the Chinese Communist rebels who have defeated the Kuomintang government. Rather, they resembled the Burmese rebels of 1931, who attempted in that year to turn the English out of their country, for both Boxers and Burmese approached their task in the same mystical spirit. The Burmese leader took a title which might be rendered King of the Angelic Guardian Dragons, and he believed that, with the assistance of supernal powers, he would be able to overcome, as he declared, 'the heathen English who have enslaved us.' His rebellion seemed too old-fashioned for the Western-educated nationalist leaders of the Burmese, and they, in general, did not support him. Nevertheless, his aim, to get rid of the foreign government, was *au fond* the same as theirs. His rebellion was a symptom of the same profound dissatisfaction with foreign rule, and though it apparently failed, its object was eventually achieved, not in the mystical way he imagined, but in a modern form when the Burmese nationalist leaders were granted independence. In the same way, what the Boxers wanted is in course of being achieved by their present-day successors, the Communists. In short, the Boxer rebellion was the authentic reflection of the deep convictions of the Chinese people, convictions of immense antiquity, which they expressed in an antique way which seemed very strange and barbarous to the modern world.

In origin the Boxers were a small secret society of the province of Shantung, a part of China which, though at no great distance from the great urban centres, had preserved its pristine innocence and poetry. In the sea off the Shantung promontory, the Fortunate Isles had always been supposed to lie, those islands of the blest where the Immortals lived, from whom, if one could gain speech with them, the secret of the elixir of life could be learned. In the middle of the province there rose up T'ai Shan, the sacred mountain, a place of pilgrimage which the fancy of a Taoist populace had converted into a fairy mount, presided over by the Goddess of Coloured Clouds. It was among these enchanted seas and hills that was born the Fist of Righteous Harmony. Its founders believed that they could save China from the danger of being swallowed by the West, because the supernal powers would aid them; their victory was assured because they knew one of the three great secrets. In the old East there were three paramount secrets which Emperors and sages had always sought, the secrets of invulnerability, of invisibility and of invincibility. They knew the secret of invulnerability, and that would suffice to give them victory.

It will be asked why at that particular moment so strong a feeling existed against the West as to call such a society into existence. A short recapitulation will explain the reason. In 1832 there had taken place the first war between the West and China. Arising out of a dispute about the importation of opium, its object had been to force China to open its ports to Western trade. The English, then the strongest nation in the world after their victories at Trafalgar and Waterloo, were the protagonists on the Western side. They forced open China and, to allay jealousy, shared out among their neighbours the concessions they won. In the face of sullen Chinese resistance, European pressure increased as the century went on. In 1860 the Emperor was obliged to flee from his capital and his Summer Palace was burnt to the ground. Thereafter, particularly by the establishment of Legations in Peking, Europe was able to tighten its grip. The Manchu dynasty was in full decline, its

sovereigns nonentities, puppets in the hand of the Dowager Empress T'zŭ Hsi, a woman whose whole ambition was to maintain herself in power in the old court style, and who did not understand that the only way China could be saved from being carved up into spheres of influence like Africa was to modernise the administration. In 1895 the nation received another rude shock. The Japanese, hitherto regarded as barbarous island dwarfs, but now armed in Western fashion, defeated the Chinese and got a footing in Korea and Formosa. Reacting to these catastrophes, a reform party, headed by an official called K'ang Yu-wei, managed in 1898 to detach the degenerate and half-witted Emperor Kuang Hsü from his formidable aunt, the Empress Dowager, and induced him to sign, between June and September, thirty-eight reform edicts, the aim of which was to introduce into China the techniques which gave Europe such overwhelming power. But the Empress Dowager, perceiving that the reform of the Court and the administration meant indirectly the end of her personal power (and, indeed, discovering a direct plot to seize her, hatched by the Emperor and the reformers), struck with her usual relentlessness and, thanks to the troops of which she could dispose, imprisoned the Emperor and executed all the reformers she could catch. By this action she put her country into the direst peril, because she prevented it from taking any steps to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* the West.

Such were the facts. The Boxers' interpretation of them was correct, but the remedy they proposed was an anachronism. They could not grasp, as the reformers had done, that to withstand the West, the secrets which gave it power must be learnt. They thought that the knowledge of the old secret of invulnerability was enough. As they were taking it upon themselves to save the country, it followed that their intention was to go their way independently of the Empress Dowager and her government. That, they knew, meant that the government would refuse to recognise them, so that if they were to succeed, they would have to brush it aside. In short, in order to drive out the foreigner, they would be obliged also to terminate the dynasty. But the dynasty deserved to go, because in the hour of China's need it had failed to take action. Thus the Boxers were in essence as anti-government as they were anti-foreign. But, as we shall see, the Empress Dowager knew how to handle them.

Orientals seem more apt at inducing self-hypnosis than are Occidentals. By self-hypnosis is meant the state which is commonly called trance. Various modern definitions of trance have been attempted. It is supposed to be a condition of dissociation of personality, where the conscious mind is invaded or possessed by the subconscious, a condition which may be either self-induced or brought about by suggestions from others. When in this state, a man is impervious to pain, may say things of which in a normal state he has no knowledge and utter words in a voice not his own. His physical condition will undergo various changes; he may shudder, be contorted or foam at the mouth. Our investigations, however, have not disclosed the precise nature of the state, for our knowledge of the mind is not sufficiently advanced. But at least it is assumed that the phenomena connected with it have nothing to do with any supposed possession by a spirit, but arise from the recesses of the mind itself. The subconscious, in fact, has become the invading spirit or god, though whether this change of nomenclature has clarified the mystery is a moot point, since the subconscious itself is unexplained. The traditional view of possession, universal until recently, was of course held in the Shantung countryside. The founders of the Boxer society seem to have been mediumistic in this sense. And it was their trances and what came out of their mouths during them that impressed the local inhabitants and helped to gain them adherents. Unlike the Taiping rebels, they had no body of doctrine, no social device by which they might cause righteous harmony to prevail. Theirs was but a simple plan of action—death to the foreigner and all would be well. They had no one leader, and differed in that respect from the generality of insurgents. As their numbers increased, they split up into bands, each with its own head Boxer. These bands

soon spread beyond the limits of Shantung and began to infest the neighbouring metropolitan province of Chihli. In the course of their progress they killed Christian missionaries, since the only foreigners in the country parts were missionaries. Chinese converts, as abettors, were also killed in large numbers.

Let us now consider what it was like to be a Chinese civil administrative officer, such as a district magistrate, when a band of Boxers entered your jurisdiction. We are able to do this because a certain Wu Yung, who was district magistrate of Huai-lai, sixty miles north-west of Peking, has left a record which has been translated.[1] Wu Yung was a representative of the best class in China, the educated gentleman. He was honest, courageous, practical and firm. His first duty was to see that law and order were kept in his district. He closely resembled a sympathetic member of the late Indian Civil Service. As soon as he heard that the Boxer bands were spreading north in his direction, he gave stringent orders that the inhabitants of his district were to have nothing to do with them. By this time the Boxers had become roving murderers. They were able to terrorise the local officials, whose police forces were not strong enough to suppress them and who had not received military aid from the Court. On getting to a town or village, they would set up an altar. In front of it they worked themselves into a frenzy, by boxing and other gymnastic antics. Then one of them would go into trance, when it seemed that the voice of some god was speaking through him, promising aid against the foreigner and inciting them to kill. The more impressionable of the villagers would also fall into trance. A hunt for foreigners and their alleged sympathisers followed. Hundreds of innocent persons would be done to death. The whole countryside was thus turned upside down and the administration of justice brought to a standstill. The lives of district officials who resisted were in jeopardy. It was indeed most courageous of Wu Yung to issue orders forbidding the people in his charge to side with Boxers.

But he could not stop the avalanche. He writes: 'Everywhere there was talk of the magic ability of the Boxers. Each man praised them higher than the next and everyone wanted to practise what they did. People talked of their power to swallow swords and to spit out flames, to call the rain and command the wind. The tales were like the legends of the gods. Farmers, women and children spread the news and all were anxious to see them. Because they felt the country's shame, and because the missionaries were unprincipled and overbearing, the people's opposition to foreigners was very strong. They welcomed a chance to unite and get their revenge.'

In this revealing passage Wu Yung shows how well he understood the elements of the situation. Not only were the Western powers pressing dangerously from the outside, but inside China the missionaries of their churches had, by demanding privileges in the law courts and giving sanctuary to converts who had committed criminal offences, made foreigners even more hated. As the excitement increased, goes on Wu Yung, the idler inhabitants of the Huai-lai district disobeyed his orders and joined the Boxers. 'I heard that in a certain village there was a young man who had practised until he had achieved magic ability and was very able at it. He could get help from any god he desired. In the country districts everyone worshipped him as a holy man.' Wu Yung sent for him. He was a youth of sixteen and 'looked as stupid as a pig.' When asked to demonstrate that he could get a spirit to possess him, he agreed. Wu Yung then says: 'He stood facing the east, with his arms hanging by his sides. His lips moved gently, but what he was saying could not be heard. After a while his cheeks began to tremble and his face became as pale as ashes left behind by fires, and his eyes became fixed and staring. Suddenly he fell flat on his back and lay with his eyes closed, his body stiff and as though without sensation. I was very much frightened, but those standing by said it did not matter, that it was the spiritual master entering his body.' Wu Yung goes on to describe how his rigidity gave place to violent contortions and how he suddenly got to his feet and again became rigid. A voice then came from his mouth that was not his voice. Thereafter he began jumping high into the air 'with movements like

[1] *The Flight of an Empress*, by Wu Yung (*Faber & Faber*)

those of ordinary boxers, wrestlers and acrobats', and did a ferocious sword dance. When Wu Yung thought the display had gone far enough, he arrested him.

It is interesting to read Wu Yung's admission that he was frightened. Since he believed that it was a case of possession (and by an evil spirit), as would have most people in the year 1900, it was an alarming thing to witness. And it was even more alarming to reflect that a madness of this kind was sweeping the country. The Boxers were ruffians, sinister fanatics, witless and cruel. What could have been more disturbing than that popular indignation against foreigners (though there was ground for it, as he allows) should have taken such a dreadful form? Moreover, he knew well, from having read the history of his own country, that such mystical bandits always mingled fraud with authentic manifestations. It is noteworthy that his description of the falling into trance corresponds closely to what has been written by those who have seen the priest called the State Oracle of Lhasa preparing to utter his prophecies. The sword dance resembles the kris dances of Bali, always performed by youths in trance. In these dances they press with all the appearance of tense effort the points of their kris daggers against their own breasts, but from all accounts seem unable to penetrate the flesh or, if they do, it heals up at once, as if they had the secret of invulnerability. The curious should read Chapter II of Beryl de Zoete's *Dance and Drama in Bali*. The three great secrets had certainly the nature of trance secrets and were ultimately connected with Yoga, a system which transcends the popular conception of possession and contains ideas similar to the modern notion that in the recesses of the mind itself are to be found supernatural powers.

There was quiet in Huai-lai for a short time after the arrest of the youth and of several others who were clapped in jail, but Wu Yung could not stop the Boxers' progress. He gives an account of the appalling situation which developed. One day over two thousand Boxers pitched their camp outside the gates of the town and erected an altar. The people went mad. 'All the men and women and children clapped their hands, stamped their feet and invited the spirits to come. I was powerless to prevent them.' It seems that he had only twenty military police. To hope for help from the capital was useless, for the whole province of Chihli was infected with the delirium. And then an extraordinary thing happened; he received an order from the government to grant the Boxers official recognition. The explanation of this will be given later on.

The result of the order was that he had to release those whom he had arrested. And it left him at the mercy of the rebels, who now regarded him as a pro-foreigner, for which they had a special name—Secondary Hairy One—foreigners themselves being called Old Hairy Ones, out of contempt for their beards and the hair on their skin, so much more profuse than the Chinese had. It was touch-and-go whether they decapitated him. They put him on trial as a Secondary Hairy One and he was only saved by his nerve and presence of mind. He knew the Chinese peasants so well, knew how to humour them and how to frighten them. But he was terribly humiliated and had the narrowest of escapes.

We must now turn our attention to the capital. It has been stated further back that in 1898, about a year and nine months before the events just described, the Empress Dowager suppressed the movement to reform the Chinese administration, imprisoned the Emperor and returned to an ultra-conservative policy, the only way, as she conceived, of maintaining herself in power. Her hatred of foreigners was intense, and though the monarchy had been forced to allow legations, she would have nothing to do with them. When the Boxer insurrection began, though she was privately sympathetic to its aims, she understood well enough that if these lawless ruffians, who had taken into their own hands what was properly the office of the government, succeeded in gaining sufficient adherents, they would soon turn directly against the dynasty, as had all such bandits in the past. She therefore issued orders for their suppression. But her subordinates had not enough troops in North China to cope with what was

becoming a sort of Jacquerie. The Boxers could not be prevented from entering Peking in force. They terrorised the citizens, marching up and down the streets, killing, burning and looting as they pleased. With the dynasty unable to maintain order in its own capital, it was doomed unless the Empress Dowager could think of a way of distracting the insurgents' attention. In fact, she had a diversion conveniently to her hand. The Legations represented a nest of foreigners. The Boxers had not attacked them yet because they had easier prey in the city among the missionaries, the thousands of converts, and, indeed, any defenceless persons they chose to suspect of being Secondary Hairy Ones. She now proposed to them to launch an attack on the Purple Bamboo Forest, as the legation area was called. When they agreed, she issued the edict giving them the official recognition which was such a bombshell to Wu Yung.

It is impossible in an article of this kind fully to clarify the Empress Dowager's motives. Superstitious and old-fashioned as she certainly was, did she think that their magical powers were real and that they would be able to destroy the foreigners whom she detested as much as they did? Or, knowing that they were bound to be worsted and their claim to invulnerability proved false, did she calculate on them losing popular support and so becoming easy to suppress? These are questions not to be answered in a few lines. Suffice it to say that in their assault on the Legations she did not assist them materially with Imperial troops; that she engaged in a devious diplomatic correspondence with the Western Powers, so that it was difficult for them to be sure whether she was behind the attack or not; and that at a certain point of the seige she sent in provisions.

By her flight, or, as she chose to call it, tour of inspection of the northern provinces, she avoided an awkward conversation with the leaders of the relief expedition which raised the seige after two months. On her return, when tempers had cooled, she was able to put all the blame on the Boxers, whose movement by this time had entirely collapsed. She steered her way with such skill that she managed to retain power until her death in 1908 when, as many believe, she took her captive, the would-be reforming Emperor, with her, seeing to it that he died the day before. Indeed, this was the period of her greatest popularity. The legend that she was a dear old lady dates from this happy autumn of her life.

We can now assess the Boxer rising in its historical perspective. It and the reform movement of 1898 were two aspects of the same thing. The participants in both, though differing in their methods, had the same object—the preservation of China as a sovereign state, the home of a distinctive culture. The culture of China was far more homogeneous than Europe's. Imagine that the Roman Empire had not gone down before the barbarians and that the Caesars had continued to rule from York to Alexandria until 1900, and one has an idea of the continuity and oneness of the Chinese Empire. It had had no dark age, was a classical piece, covered indeed with the patina of four milleniums, but retaining its shape and substance. It had been preserved by its inhabitants because they held it to be the best conceivable culture, and their dominant passion was still to preserve it. It would last for ever if the Outer Barbarians would leave it alone. For them to entrench upon it was to arouse a mortal enmity from all classes. The rustic Boxers felt called upon to act according to their lights after metropolitan reformers had tried their way and failed. When the Boxers failed, in their turn, the whole country was racked with terrible apprehension. But on the death of the Dowager, whose personal ambition prevented her from seeing China's predicament, the reformers again took heart. Within four years they had terminated the dynasty and established a republic vowed to resuscitate China by modern means.

During all the ups and downs of the last thirty-eight years, the constant objective has remained to throw off the West. It is the prime objective today in Korea. Only when the bugbear of foreign interference is laid, will the people be safe. That was the cry of the Boxers, and it is still the cry.

BLAISE CENDRARS

HENRY MILLER

CENDRARS was the first French writer to look me up during my stay in Paris, and the last man I saw on leaving Paris. I had just a few minutes to catch the train for Rocamadour and I was having a last drink on the *terrasse* of my hotel near the Porte d'Orléans when Cendrars hove in sight. Nothing could have given me greater joy than this unexpected last-minute encounter. In a few words I told him of my intention to visit Greece. Then I sat back and drank in the music of his sonorous voice which to me always seemed to come from a sea organ. In those last few minutes Cendrars managed to convey a world of information, and with the same warmth and tenderness which he exudes in his books. Like the very ground under our feet, his thoughts were honeycombed with all manner of subterranean passages. I left him sitting there in shirt-sleeves, never dreaming that years would elapse before hearing from him again, never dreaming that I was perhaps taking my last look at Paris.

I had read whatever was translated of Cendrars before arriving in France: that is to say, almost nothing. My first taste of him in his own language came at a time when my French was none too proficient. I began with *Moravagine*, a book by no means easy to read for one who knows little French. I read it slowly, with a dictionary by my side, shifting from one café to another. It was in the Café de la Liberté, at the corner of the Rue de la Gaîeté and the Boulevard Edgar Quinet, that I began it. I remember well the day.

Here is one of the passages I remember as clearly as the day I first read it. It begins at the top of page 77 (Editions Grasset, 1926).

'I tell you of things that brought some relief at the start. There was also the water, gurgling at intervals, in the water-closet pipes. A boundless despair possessed me.' (Does this convey anything to you, my dear Cendrars?)

Immediately I think of two other passages, even more deeply engraved in my mind, from *Une Nuit dans la Forêt*,[1] which I read about three years later. I cite them not to brag of my powers of memory but to reveal an aspect of Cendrars of which his English and American readers probably do not suspect the existence.

1. I, the freest man that exists, recognise that there is always something that binds one: that liberty, independence do not exist, and I am full of contempt for, and at the same time take pleasure in, my helplessness.

2. More and more I realise that I have always led the contemplative life. I am a sort of Brahmin in reverse, meditating on himself amid the hurly-burly, who, with all his strength, disciplines himself and scorns existence. Or the boxer with his shadow, who, furiously, calmly, punching at emptiness, watches his form. What virtuosity, what science, what balance, the ease with which he accelerates! *Later, one must learn how to take punishment with equal imperturbability.*[2] I, I know how to take punishment and with serenity I fructify and with serenity destroy myself: in short, work in the world not so much to enjoy as to make others enjoy (it's others' reflexes that give me pleasure, not my own). Only a soul full of despair can ever attain serenity and, to be in despair, you must have loved a good deal and *still love the world.*[2]

These last two passages have probably been cited many times already and will no doubt be cited many times more as the years go by. They are memorable ones and thoroughly the author's own. Those who know only *Sutter's Gold*, *Panama* and *On the Trans-Siberian*, which are about all the American reader gets to know, may indeed

[1] Editions du Verseau, Lausanne, 1929 [2] Italics mine

wonder on reading the foregoing passages why this man has not been translated more fully. Long before I attempted to make Cendrars better known to the American public (and to the world at large, I may well add), John Dos Passos had translated and illustrated with water-colours *Panama, or The Adventures of my Seven Uncles.*[1]

However, the primary thing to know about Blaise Cendrars is that he is a man of many parts. He is also a man of many books, many kinds of books, and by that I do not mean 'good' and 'bad' but books so different one from another that he gives the impression of evolving in all directions at once. An evolved man, truly. Certainly an evolved writer.

His life itself reads like the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment.* And this individual who has led a super-dimensional life is also a book-worm. The most gregarious of men and yet a solitary. ('*O mes solitudes!*') A man of deep intuition and invincible logic. The logic of life. Life first and foremost. Life always with a capital L. That's Cendrars.

To follow his career from the time he slips out of his parents' home in Neufchâtel, a boy of fifteen or sixteen, to the days of the Occupation when he secretes himself in Aix-en-Provence and imposes on himself a long period of silence, is something to make one's head spin. The itinerary of his wanderings is more difficult to follow than Marco Polo's, whose trajectory, incidentally, he seems to have crossed and re-crossed a number of times. One of the reasons for the great fascination he exerts over me is the resemblance between his voyages and adventures and those which I associate in memory with Sinbad the Sailor or Aladdin of the Wonderful Lamp. The amazing experiences which he attributes to the characters in his books, and which as often as not he has shared, have all the qualities of legend as well as the authenticity of legend. Worshipping life and the truth of life, he comes closer than any author of our time to revealing the common source of words and deed. He restores to contemporary life the elements of the heroic, the imaginative and the fabulous. His adventures have led him to nearly every region of the globe, particularly those regarded as dangerous or inaccessible. (One must read his early life especially to appreciate the truth of this statement.) He has consorted with all types, including bandits, murderers, revolutionaries and other varieties of fanatic. He has tried out no less than thirty-six *métiers*, according to his own words, but, like Balzac, gives the impression of knowing every *métier*. He was once a juggler, for example, on the English music-hall stage, at the same time as Chaplin was making his début there; he was a pearl merchant and a smuggler; he was a plantation owner in South America, where he made a fortune three times in succession and lost them even more rapidly than he had made them. But read his life! There is more in it than meets the eye.

Yes, he is an explorer and investigator of the ways and doings of men. And he has made himself such by planting himself in the middle of life, by taking up his lot with his fellow creatures. What a superb, painstaking reporter he is, this man who would scorn the thought of being called 'a student of life'. He has the faculty of getting 'his story' by a process of osmosis; he seems to seek nothing deliberately. Which is why, no doubt, his own story is always interwoven with the other man's. To be sure, he possesses the art of distillation, but what he is vitally interested in is the alchemical nature of all relationships. This eternal quest of the transmutative enables him to reveal men to themselves and to the world; it causes him to extol men's virtues, to reconcile us to their faults and weaknesses, to increase our knowledge and respect for what is essentially human, to deepen our love and understanding of the world. He is the 'reporter' *par excellence* because he combines the faculties of poet, seer and prophet. An innovator and initiator, ever the first to give testimony, he has made known to us the real pioneers, the real adventurers, the real discoverers among our contemporaries. More than any writer I can think of, he has made dear to us '*le bel aujourd'hui*'.

Whilst performing on all levels, he always found time to read. On long

[1]See Chapter 12, 'Homer of the Trans-Siberian', *Orient Express* (Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, N.Y. 1922)

Cendrars, 1919 *Fernand Leger*

voyages, in the depths of the Amazon, in the deserts (I imagine he knows them all, those of the earth, those of the spirit), in the jungle, on the broad pampas, on trains, trams, tramps and ocean liners, in the great museums and libraries of Europe, Asia and Africa, he has buried himself in books, has ransacked whole archives, has photographed rare documents, and probably, though I do not recall his ever saying so, has stolen invaluable books, scripts, documents of all kinds—and why not, considering the enormity of his appetite for the rare, the curious, the forbidden?

He has told us in one of his recent books how the Germans (*les Boches!*) destroyed or carried off, I forget which, his precious library, precious to a man like Cendrars who loves to give the most precise data when referring to a passage from one of his favourite books. Thank God, his memory is alive and functions like a faithful machine. An incredible memory, as will testify those who have read his more recent books—*La Main Coupée*, *l'Homme Foudroyé*, *Bourlinguer*, *Le Lotissement du Ciel*, *La Banlieue de Paris*.

On the side—with Cendrars it seems as though almost everything of account has been done 'on the side'—he has translated the works of other writers, notably the Portuguese author, Ferreira de Castro (*Forêt Vierge*) and our own Al Jennings, the great outlaw and bosom friend of O'Henry.[1] What a wonderful translation is *Hors-la-loi* which in English is called *Through the Shadows with O'Henry*. It is a sort of secret collaboration between Cendrars and the innermost being of Al Jennings. Cendrars had not yet met Jennings nor even corresponded with him. (This is another book, I must say in passing, which our pocket-book editors have overlooked. There is a fortune in it, unless I am all wet, and it would be comforting to think that part of this fortune should find its way into Al Jennings' pocket.)

One of the most fascinating aspects of Cendrars' temperament is his ability and readiness to collaborate with a fellow artist. Picture him, shortly after the First World War, editing the publications of La Sirène! What an opportunity! To him we owe an edition of *Les Chants de Maldoror*, the first to appear, if I am not mistaken, since the original private publication by the author (in 1868?). In everything an innovator, always meticulous, scrupulous and exacting in his demands, whatever issued

1 Cendrars has also translated Al Capone's autobiography

from the hands of Cendrars at La Sirène is now a valuable collector's item. Hand in hand with this capability for collaboration goes another quality—the ability, or grace, to make the first overtures. Whether it be a criminal, a saint, a man of genius, a tyro with promise, Cendrars is the first to look him up, the first to herald him, the first to aid him in the way the person most desires. I speak with justifiable warmth here. No writer ever paid me a more signal honour than dear Blaise Cendrars who, shortly after the publication of *Tropic of Cancer*, knocked at my door one day to extend the hand of friendship. Nor can I forget that first tender, eloquent review of the book which appeared under his signature in *Orbes* shortly thereafter. (Or perhaps it was *before* he appeared at the studio in the Villa Seurat.)

There were times when reading Cendrars—and this is something which happens to me rarely—that I put the book down in order to wring my hands with joy or despair, with anguish or with desperation. Cendrars has stopped me in my tracks again and again, just as implacably as a gunman pressing a rod against one's spine. Oh yes, I am often carried away by exaltation in reading a man's work. But I am alluding to something other than exaltation. I am talking of a sensation in which all one's emotions are blended and confused. I am talking of knock-out blows. Cendrars has knocked me cold. Not once, but a number of times. And I am not exactly a ham, when it comes to taking it on the chin! Yes, *mon cher Cendrars*, you not only stopped *me*, you stopped the clock. It has taken me days, weeks, sometimes months, to recover from these bouts with you. Even years later, I can put my hand to the spot where I caught the blow and feel the old smart. You battered and bruised me; you left me scarred, dazed, punch-drunk. The curious thing is that the better I know you—through your books—the more susceptible I become. It is as if you had put the Indian sign on me. I come forward with chin outstretched—'to take it.' *I am your meat*, as I have so often said. And it is because I believe I am not unique in this, because I wish others to enjoy this uncommon experience, that I continue to put in my little word for you whenever, wherever, I can.

I incautiously said—'the better I know you.' My dear Cendrars, I will never know you, not as I do other men, of that I am certain. No matter how thoroughly you reveal yourself, I shall never get to the bottom of you. I doubt if any one ever will, and it is not vanity which prompts me to put it this way. You are as inscrutable as a Buddha. You inspire, you reveal, but you never give yourself wholly away. Not that you withhold yourself! No, encountering you, whether in person or through the written word, you leave the impression of having given all there is to give. Indeed, you are one of the few men I know who, in their books as well as in person, give that 'extra measure' which means everything to us. You give all that *can* be given. It is not your fault that the very core of you forbids scrutiny. It is the law of your being. No doubt there are men less inquisitive, less grasping, less clutching, for whom these remarks are meaningless. But you have so refined our sensitivity, so brightened our awareness, so deepened our love for men and women, for books, for nature, for a thousand and one things of life which only one of your own unending paragraphs could catalogue, that you awaken in us the desire to turn you inside out. When I read you or talk to you, I am always aware of your inexhaustible awareness: you are not just sitting in a chair in a room in a city in a country, telling us what is on your mind or in your mind; you make the chair talk and the room vibrate with the tumult of the city whose life is sustained by the invisible outer throng of a whole nation whose history has become your history, whose life is your life and yours theirs, and as you talk or write, all these elements, images, facts, creations enter into your thoughts and feelings, forming a web which the spider in you ceaselessly spins and which spreads in us, your listeners, until the whole of creation is involved, and we, you, them, it, everything, have lost identity and found new meaning, new life . . .

Before proceeding further, there are two books on Cendrars which I would like to

recommend to all who are interested in knowing more about the man. Both are entitled *Blaise Cendrars*. One is by Jacques-Henry Levèsque (Editions de la Nouvelle Critique, Paris, 1947), the other by Louis Parrot (Editions Pierre Seghers, Paris, 1948), finished on the author's death-bed. Both contain bibliographies, excerpts from Cendrars' works, and a number of photographs taken at various periods of his life. Those who do not read French may glean a surprising knowledge of this enigmatic individual from the photographs alone. (It is amazing what spice and vitality French publishers lend their publications through the insertion of old photographs. Seghers has been particularly enterprising in this respect. In his series of little square books, called *Poètes d'Aujourd'hui*, he has given us a veritable gallery of contemporary and near contemporary figures.)

Yes, one can glean a lot about Cendrars just from studying his physiognomy. He has probably been photographed more than any contemporary writer. In addition, sketches and portraits of him have been made by any number of celebrated artists, including Modigliani, Apollinaire, Léger. Flip the pages of the two books I just mentioned—Levèsque's and Parrot's. Take a good look at this *gueule* which Cendrars has presented to the world in a thousand different moods. Some will make you weep; some are almost hallucinating. There is one photo of him taken in uniform during the days of the Foreign Legion when he was a corporal. His left hand, holding a butt which is burning his fingers, protrudes from beneath the cape; it is a hand so expressive, so very eloquent, that if you do not know the story of his missing arm, this will convey it unerringly. It is with this powerful and sensitive left hand that he has written most of his books, signed his name to innumerable letters and post-cards, shaved himself, washed himself, guided his speedy Alfa-Roméo through the most dangerous terrains.

In 1928 we have the photo which has been reprinted by the thousands. It is Cendrars of the South American period, looking fit, sleek almost, well garbed, his conk crowned by a handsome fedora with its soft brim upturned. He has a burning, far-away look in the eyes, as if he had just come back from the Antarctic. (I believe it was in this period that he was writing, or had just finished, *Dan Yack*, the first half of which (*Le Plan de l'Aiguille*) has only recently been issued in translation by an English publisher.[1]) But it is in 1944 that we catch a glimpse of *le vieux Légionnaire*—photo by Chardon, Cavaillon. Here he reminds one of Victor MacLaglan in the rôle of The Informer. This is the period of *l'Homme Foudroyé*, for me one of his major books. Here he is the fully developed earth man composed of many rich layers—roustabout, tramp, bum, panhandler, mixer, bruiser, adventurer, sailor, soldier, tough guy, the man of a thousand and one hard, bitter experiences who never went under, but ripened, ripened, ripened. *Un homme, quoi!* . . . I force myself to draw rein. I could go on for ever about the 'physiognomic' aspects of the man. His is a mug one can never forget. It's *human*, that's what: human like Chinese faces, like Egyptian, Cretan, Etruscan ones.

Many are the things which have been said against this writer . . . that his books are cinematic in style, that they are sensational, that he exaggerates and deforms *à l'outrance*, that he is prolix and verbose, that he lacks all sense of form, that he is too much the realist, or else that his narratives are too incredible, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Taken altogether, there is, to be sure, a grain of truth in these accusations, but let us remember—*only a grain*! They reflect the views of the paid critic, the academician, the frustrated novelist. But supposing, for a moment, we accepted them at face value. Will they hold water? Take his cinematic technique, for example. Well, are we not living in the age of the cinema? Is not this period of history more fantastic, more 'incredible', than the simulacrum of it which we see unrolled on the silver screen? As for his sensationalism—have we forgotten Gilles de Rais, the Marquis de Sade, the *Memoirs* of Casanova? As for hyperbole, what of Pindar? As for prolixity and verbosity, what about Jules Romains or Marcel Proust? As for exaggeration and deformation, what of Rabelais, Swift, Céline, to mention an

[1]Title: *Antarctic Fugue*, Pushkin Press, London, 1948

anomalous trinity? As for lack of form, that perennial jackass which is always kicking up its heels in the pages of literary reviews, have I not heard cultured Europeans rant about the 'vegetal' aspect of Hindu temples, their façades studded with a riot of human, animal and other forms? Have I not seen them twisting their lips in distaste when examining the amazing efflorescences embodied in Tibetan scrolls? No taste, eh? No sense of proportion? No control? *C'est ça. De la mesure avant tout!* These cultured nobodies forget that their beloved exemplars, the Greeks, worked with Cyclopean blocks, created monstrosities as well as apotheoses of harmony, grace form and spirit; they forget perhaps that the Cycladic sculpture of Greece surpassed in abstraction and simplification anything which Brancusi or his followers ever attempted. The very mythology of these worshippers of beauty, whose motto was 'Nothing to the extreme', is a revelation of the 'monstrous' aspect of their being.

Oui, Cendrars is full of excrescences. There are passages which swell up out of the body of his text like rank tumours. There are detours, parentheses, asides, which are the embryonic pith and substance of books yet to come. There is a grand efflorescence and exfoliation, and there is also a grand wastage of material in his books. Cendrars neither cribs and cabins nor does he drain himself completely. When the moment comes to let go, he lets go. When it is expedient or efficacious to be brief, he is brief and to the point—like a dagger. To me his books reflect his lack of fixed habits, or better still, his ability to break a habit. (A sign of real emancipation!) In those swollen paragraphs, which are like *une mer houleuse*, and which some readers, apparently, are unable to cope with, Cendrars reveals his oceanic spirit. We who vaunt dear Shakespeare's madness, his elemental outbursts —are we to fear these cosmic gusts? We who swallowed the *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* via Urquhart—are we to be daunted by catalogues of names, places, dates, events? We who produced the oddest writer in any tongue—Lewis Carroll—are we to shy away from the play of words, from the ridiculous, the grotesque, the unspeakable or the 'utterly impossible'? It takes a *man* to hold his breath as Cendrars does when he is about to unleash one of his triple-page paragraphs without stop. *A man?* A deep-sea diver. A whale. A whale of a man, precisely.

What *is* remarkable is that this same man has also given us some of the shortest sentences ever written, particularly in his poems and prose poems. Here, in staccato rhythm—let us not forget that before he was a writer he was a musician!—he deploys a telegraphic style. (It might also be called 'telesthetic'.) One can read it as fast as Chinese with whose written characters his vocables have a curious affinity, to my way of thinking. This particular technique of Cendrars' creates a kind of exorcism—a deliverance from the weight of prose, from the impedimenta of grammar and syntax, from the illusory intelligibility of the merely communicative in speech. In *l'Eubage*, for example, we discover a sibylline quality of thought and utterance. It is one of his curious books. An extreme. Also a departure and an end.

Cendrars is indeed difficult to classify, though why we should want to classify him, I don't know. Sometimes I think of him as 'a writer's writer', though he is definitely not that. But what I mean to say is that a writer has much to learn from Cendrars. In school, I remember, we were always being urged to take as models men like Macaulay, Coleridge, Ruskin, or Edmund Burke—even de Maupassant. Why they didn't say Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, I don't know. No professor ever believed, I dare say, that any of us brats would turn out to be writers one day. They were failures themselves, hence teachers. Cendrars has made it clear that the only teacher, the only model, is life itself. What a writer can learn from Cendrars is to follow his nose, to obey life's commands, to worship no other god but life. Some interpreters will have it that Cendrars means 'the dangerous life'. I don't believe Cendrars would limit it thus. He means *life* pure and simple, in all its aspects, all its ramifications, all its by-paths, temptations, hazards, what not. If he is an adventurer, he is an adventurer in all realms of life.

What interests him is *every* phase of life. The subjects he has touched on, the themes he has pursued, are encyclopaedic. Another sign of 'emancipation', this all-inclusive absorption in life's myriad manifestations. It is often when he seems most 'realistic', for example, that he tends to pull all the stops on his organ. The realist is a meagre soul. He sees what is in front of him, like a horse with blinders. Cendrars' vision is perpetually open; it is almost as if he had an extra eye buried in his crown, a skylight open to all the cosmic rays. Such a man, you may be sure, will never complete his life's work because life will always be a step ahead of him. Besides, life knows no completion, and Cendrars is one with life. An article by Pierre de Latil in *La Gazette des Lettres*, Paris, 6 August 1949, informs us that Cendrars has projected a dozen or more books to be written within the next few years. It is an astounding programme, considering that Cendrars is now in his sixties, that he has no secretary, that he writes with his left hand, that he is restless underneath, always itching to sally forth and see more of the world, that he actually detests writing and looks upon his work as forced labour. He works on four or five books at a time. He will finish them all I am certain. I only pray that I live to read the trilogy of *les souvenirs humains* called *Archives de Ma Tour D'ivoire*, which will consist of: *Hommes de Lettres*, *Hommes d'Affaires* and *Vie des Hommes Obscurs*. Particularly the last-named . . .

[*To be concluded.*]

Cendrars 1936 *Jean Gruerin*

THE OLD STRIFE AT PLANT'S

JOYCE CARY

This tale, in which an old woman relates the story of how she made her life, partly by instinct, partly by guile; and an artist composes, in his mind, various versions of a picture out of given intuitions, was originally a chapter from a book of mine called The Horse's Mouth. *It was one of the earliest written, and it was designed, like chapters thirteen and twenty-six of the same book, as an experiment to discover if and how certain movements and relations of the theme could be expressed.*

Two of the characters, Gulley Jimson and Plant, are still in the book. The first is the artist down on his luck, but still working; the other is a friend of his, a cobbler, and something of an evangelical anarchist, who holds occasional uplift meetings in his basement. The scene is this basement at such a meeting; and it is seen through Gulley Jimson's eyes.

The chapter stayed in the book until the first complete draft was assembled. Then it was cut out for three chief reasons: because it brought in a new character, the old woman, when the book had already all the characters it needed; because it had not enough about one leading character, Sara Monday, who was needed; and because the old woman's story was a closed story.

What I mean by a closed story is an anecdote complete in itself. Such an anecdote in any novel is like a knot in a deck-plank, a snag in a brook; it spoils the run of the grain, the current's flow.

So the old woman was put out and Sara brought in. But my wife, when she was typing the new draft, came to me and asked indignantly what had happened to 'her' chapter, saying that it was the best in the book. And she took care that it was kept, making me promise to use it, perhaps in a short story with a different artist.

But when at last, about a year ago, having finished a book, I was reminded of my promise (as twice before, when other books were finished), I found it impossible to take Gulley out of the text. He and the old woman were too closely entangled to be dissected apart without killing the tale. So I left them together in their complex battle with the elements, recalcitrant enough, of their several creative fields.—THE AUTHOR.

It was going to be a good meeting, I could see that already. More and more people kept floating in. Like fish in an aquarium full of dirty grey water. There were three dimensions of fish faces on top of each other. Bobbing slowly to and fro, up and down. Old octopus in the corner with a green dome and a blue beak, working all his arms to take off his coat without losing his chair. Old female in black creeping among the lumpy dusk on the sea floor and shooting out her umbrella like a crawfish. Young skate stuck up against the wall with bulgy eyelids and a little white mouth. Never moving. You'd have thought he was a country cousin up for the nauticultural show, flabbergasted by all the flittering dabs, bald-headed herrings with sleek summer suitings, and unctuous eels in skin-tight silks that kept winding themselves past his pearly waistcoat and diving into their nooks and ambushes. They kept on diving at me and sitting on me until they knocked my feelings so low I wanted to burst into tears. So I took a chair into the scullery to be low in private, and shut the door to get up my misery. For I knew where Plantie kept his bottled beer, under the draining board, and I said to myself, a drink is just what I want to do me bad; and if I could only get bad enough, I'd enjoy it.

But I got no time to cultivate my weeds, for at once the audience came pushing up their chairs against my door. The people in front were making themselves comfortable for the agony before them and

stretching their legs and pushing backwards to snatch a little floor from the people behind. As happens at all meetings, except in a church with sound Christian principles where they screw the pews to the floor. And just as I was opening the first bottle, they knocked the door in and pushed a chair half through. And when I tried to push it back again, Plantie got up and introduced Professor Ponting, who turned out to be the moon-coloured gentleman against the wall, the skate.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' said Plantie, 'we have here tonight the great privilege of meeting the great—that is, the great—'

I pushed the chair forward and the Christians pushed it back, ten to one. But still I might have got the door shut if just then the old crawfish hadn't come working sideways along the row, apologizing and groaning and sticking her umbrella into everybody's eyes until she got her backside wedged up against the scullery door. Then the whole profession began to hiss at her and she got her umbrella jammed between a lady's hat and a young friend's necktie, and some good responsible elder, looking carefully the other way, gave her a hard shove with his elbow. And she tumbled against the scullery door. But there was the empty chair. The very way she sat down on it was a thank you to the Lord for all his providence. Until she saw me behind the door. Then she jumped several inches and her whiskers went round in circles. 'Oh dear, you wasn't keeping it, was you, sir?'

'No, Mother, I'm not really here at all.' 'I never thought I should have got one.' 'It's not one really, is it, it's outside.' 'Well, I didn't want to be in front, it didn't seem right when I only came in off the street. And I didn't want to be at the back either, I'm a bit hard of hearing.'

I took a pull at the stout and felt much worse at once. It washed up all my molecules off their ancient mudbanks, and sent them floating with the tide, ebb tide. Why, I said to myself, whoever said I could paint. Nobody that knows, and is it likely. Me, Gulley! A genius. Get on with you. That's the very tale the lads at the local tell each other when their teeth drop out and the bill of sale falls in. I'm a bum. Anyone could see that in the dark without straining his nose. And the proof is, I don't like my own work. Bless you, what's the sign of true genius, even if it isn't? That it believes in itself, that it's got the strawberry mark. Look at 'em all from Ozymandias to Frank Harris. They tell you right away. Any ladies present? All right, look here, old chap. I've got something. See, I'm unique. I create worlds.

Loud sounds the hammer of Los, loud turn the wheels of Enitharmon,
Her looms vibrate with soft affections, weaving the web of life
Out from the ashes of the dead. Los lifts his iron ladles
With molten ore; he heaves the iron cliffs in his rattling chains
From Hyde Park to the alms houses of Mile End and Old Bow.

The old woman slid back her chair six inches and gave a sigh like a trace horse at the top of the hill where the grade gets worse than ever. It made me look at her and I saw that she was a real old woman, about thirty years past the age of demeanor. With a real old woman's face, like an old stone lizard, a real Eve. Eyes all in wrinkles, long thin mouth, long bony nose, and her chin right up to it. She was chewing her meditations and I thought they were memories until she put the crook of her umbrella under her bonnet and made a face and scratched her head as if she hated it. Took the umbrella half way down again, but kept it at the ready and sat still with her eyes turned sideways like an old dog waiting for the fleas to start biting again. To make sure of execution. Vengeance is mine.

'My friends—' the Professor had got to work, and you could see at once that he was a real art school professional by the way he blocked out his composition, starting with the chief vertical. 'My friends, I ask only why is there no abiding joy in the world, no certain peace,' and then laying down a good strong horizontal for the base, 'except among the very humblest of living creatures.'

The old woman gave it up. The inhabitants had had a shock, they'd stopped

feeding. Sheep in a thunderstorm. She took down the umbrella and let out another sigh, a long one. Disappointed of her effect.

I opened another bottle and it sank me to the bottom. I perceived that as a genius I was a figment and not a very strong one either. Not enough to deceive a teenager after a cup of British coffee.

And then, of course, I fell out of the bottom. Good-bye art, good-bye paint, good-bye all that fiddle about which way to do what, or how to bring up the thin-gummy without losing the thongummy. To hell with all creation, I said to myself. I'm free; and I poured myself out another glass of immaterial comfort. The old woman heard the clink and looked at me with her left ear.

'Have some, Mother?' For I took to her. I take to everybody when I'm free. Why not, there's plenty of time. 'Come on, Mother, it'll do you good, take years off your mind.' But she shook her head so hard that her backbone rattled. 'Oh no, thank you, sir, not just now.' 'Why not now?' She wrinkled one eye at the professor as if to say, 'Not in the sermon.' 'Is that it?' I said. 'Bless you, that's what he's saying, be happy, do what you like.' 'Well, if you won't take no,' and she put out her ancient claw. But went slowly at the glass, sip, sip, like a tired horse with sighs between.

'Out for a holiday, Mother?' 'Well, I thought it might do me good.' 'Religion'. 'I used to go to church too at one time; oh yes, I had a lot of religion.' 'What do you think of this sorcerer tonight?' 'Well, what's he saying?' 'He's giving you the magic word.' She took a sip and breathed hard. 'I suppose it's a message, isn't it? But I keep on wandering off.' 'I know, Mother, it's due to the thoughts.' 'No, it's the worry; oh dear, I didn't ought to have come.' She finished her porter and wiped her lips with the handle of her umbrella. 'My old man might be home any minute and find me gone.' 'Jealousy is a compliment, whatever you may say.' 'Oh dear, it's not that, but he's got so old.' 'What does a girl like you want with an old man?' She looked at me and moved her wrinkles a little to show she appreciated my gallantry. But she didn't smile, she was too old. 'Yes,' she said, 'all of a sudden it was; why, it was only a week I noticed it—no, on Monday—Monday was a week.'

'He may have got a bit younger since then,' I said, but she didn't notice, she was still taking a survey of her possessions. 'Of course, he did have a stroke last year, he's all of one side. And fits. He's had fits these ten years. And pneumonia all the winter. But I'd never noticed how old he'd got. It fair knocked me down. Why, Bill, I said, whatever has happened to you, you look so terrible old?—And what about you, you old faggot, he came back at me just like a mad bull. Oh he do have a terrible temper these days. It's a word and a swear. But there, with one leg as good as dead, and being deaf on one side, and half blind, and noises in his head like a tram-car, it's no wonder.'

'That's not so old,' I said. 'If he's still got a temper and no responsibilities. It's being free, old lady, to do what a man likes that stretches out the years behind and before. Look at me. I'm a hundred and five and I've lost the use of all my limbs, including my hay and my ho and my hay nonnino—my face is false, and I can't smell a rat, even in the art news, except by bone induction. But I'm not old, not just now. I've retired, old lady, I've got nothing to do but dance in the wild, from this day on, and grow younger and younger. Drink up, Mother,' and I filled her glass. 'Drink up and go backwards.'

But she only sipped and sighed. 'That's right,' she said, but she wasn't listening. She was too old, except to talk about her own affairs.

'So he called you a faggot,' I said, making so free. 'Oh, worse than that,' said she, tossing her nose. She liked to think of the things she'd been called. 'He's a terror with his tongue. Always was.' 'And you never answered back?' 'Oh but I did. Oh yes. I used to have a tongue too. Oh the things I've said to him,' turning them over to get the richness. She liked to think of the things she'd said to him. 'And when did the concert begin?' 'Oh my, mister, the very first day.' 'And why did it go on, why didn't you cut off?' 'Oh dear, but we was so fond of each other too—something terrible. He was a handsome chap and no mistake.'

She raised the umbrella and rolled the old eyes upwards. The flock was nibbling again, getting back its nerve. Rainbows in the cloud. God's promise.

'This is not the biased argument of some superstitious creed remote from the stern realities of our modern world,' said the skate, throwing out his ground bait, 'but a fact, a scientific fact. A bird will die upon its eggs, the ewe will fight for her young.'

The old woman made a jab with her hook hard enough to make a hole in her skull, and scratched the crater with a grin of rage and satisfaction. 'That'll learn 'em to enjoy themselves,' I said. But she didn't hear me. She was waiting for another bite.

'The universal power of love—the spirit of mutual understanding—and do not the very creatures feel the divine purpose of that revelation.' The old woman pulled down the umbrella and peaked up her chin.

'He speaks nice, that young man, and he's right too—like creatures we was—we didn't know what was coming to us.

'The mixture as before,' I said. 'It's always new,' opening another bottle. But she was listening to the skate with all her eyes and the front of her bonnet, while he was going into the conscience of humanity sent by God to guide mankind through the wickedness of the world. And she couldn't make anything of it. She gave a sigh and made a chop with her weapon at her ear where her bonnet touched it. Thinking it was a flank attack. 'Cheer up, mam,' I said. 'You got a handsome man and no mistake.'

'Oh, but I had plenty of offers,' and she perked up again. 'I was a pretty gal, you know.' At eighty they were all pretty gals. 'Healthy too, and well grown. Oh, I was fit to jump over the steeple. And he was March mad. Oh deary, he was fevering for me, he couldn't believe his luck; well, it was a wonder I got to the church before I was spoiled, but thank God and my old mam, I had a good training. Why, she would take a stick to me when I was twice bigger than she and ripe these three years. Oh, but I was feared of my mam, oh, she was a cruel one.' And you could hear how she liked to remember how her mam had put the fear of death into her. 'Oh, she kept me good, good for my man. And we thanked God for it, God and my mam.'

'I dare say she hurt you more than it hurt her.' 'Well, she took the trouble, and I was a trouble. You'd think the devil had got into me with my growing.' 'So he does,' I said. 'I suppose it's his job,' and I filled up for her. 'Oh, crimini, not no more, not but it warms out the runcles.' 'Isn't that its job?' But she wasn't listening. She was thinking, like an old horse over the trough, with the drops on her moustache. Topaz, with a touch of opal off the side of the sink.

'Happy days, Mother'. She shook her bonnet, and two amber tears splashed on her little round belly, like an empty dish cover, covered in crepe. 'I shouldn't like to say we was happy.' 'Well, he was happy.' 'Not what you'd call happy. It was all such a skrimble-skramble.'

'I know what you mean, mam, you hadn't time.' 'Not really.' 'Not any way,' I said, turning my glass about to see if a bit of Indian red on the brown was local colour or reflection from Plantie's scullery wall. 'Well,' I said, 'I suppose love is a bit of an emotion, it runs you about a bit, don't it?' 'Oh, deary dear,' she raised the old crest, 'up and down and all round —such a huddle and a muddle.' 'You wouldn't have it over again for a thousand pounds.' 'I wouldn't say that, mister, if I could have it not all of a rush and a little bit different.' 'Different husband?' 'Why no, he was terrible fond, and so was I. It was only we didn't know—well, we didn't know—' 'You didn't know how nice it was till it was all over—nobody does.' And I thought, it's a little bit of both and a touch of chrome in it too, old gold, and when you get the gas light on the glass it throws a glow against the yellow that's really rather unexpected—yes, it's interesting, that under colour—

'Oh lawsie,' and the old one was off again, singing from the soul. 'Oh you're right. Oh nobody knows, and as for loving —' 'Never a moment's peace to enjoy yourselves.' 'I won't say that, no, I won't— we had our times.'

'Well, sir, he had a regular fit that first night when he saw my hair come down, and it was hair too. I could sit on it. Half-crying he was, and laughing too, and he

put out his hand to stroke it. "Don't you touch it," I said. "Well," he said, "what a tale; isn't that allowed, not if I go on my knees?" "You're a silly boy," I said, for I thought it mightn't be Christian. "Get up," I said, "you'll spoil our luck." Oh my, oh my, I was only eighteen, you know, as hard as a bud. And then he got up and he lost his manners. Oh mysie, I druv him regular mad. Well, if you'll excuse me, as a married man he couldn't hold himself in and what did I know except that it wasn't suitable. And there we was, arguing and shaming each other. Oh, it was a sillification; oh, we were young.'

And you could see how she liked being young, oh dear, all over again. And I kept on looking at my glass, in a careless way, as you might look at a girl, not to frighten her off, and I thought: All the same, it's something, that brown, it's almost an event. And all at once that brown came right out at me, gave me the eye. It made the old skin jump, it sent the tingles through the tops of my fingers. Here, I said, does she know I've retired. What is she thinking of? But I knew what she wanted—still life with bottle of ale, or porter. Or landscape with pond—autumn landscape and brown reflections. Or yes, damme, why not, dock with tramp, a bit rusty round the water line to give the high light from old Plantie's scullery bricks.

'Oh mysie, that's when it began, the very first night.' 'Yes, mam,' I said, but I was a bit absent, running round the docks. 'That was it, or was it?' 'The very first night.' 'Didn't your mother—' 'Oh, crimini, it wasn't that, I was a country girl. It was the grandma.' 'Grandma,' I said, feeling the shock, for I hadn't expected her to pop up in those parts. 'Your grandma, Grandma?' 'Mine, never. His grandma. She lived with us, and just when we might have got things right and proper, she would go cough, cough. I was up and down all night with her. And just her spite because he'd got his piece and wouldn't let her go to the workus. Well, I said so at last, and he fired up and said his grandma had always been good to him when he was a lad. I dare say, I said, good for him but not for me. It's not what I had a right to expect, a gal that everyone owned was a toothsome bit. And so we were at it. And I said I'd go home to my mam; yes, in my nighty, and he said the sooner the better. So, of course, I didn't do that neither.'

'The sooner,' I said, 'the better,' filling her up, for I was all in a sweat. I wanted to be alone to examine my entrails and cast the auspices. That brown had got me, no doubt about it, and the first time in my life. I'm not saying I haven't been had before by something brunetty, but I was virgin to a brown like that one, a big brown, a classic brown, a Beaumont brown, a brown with the brow of an empress and the kick of a brood mare. Not that anything so majestic would condescend to kick. The blood royal, yes, you could see it under the skin when you turned the glass a trifle edgeways. I was fairly flummoxed—shy as an Academy knight kissing hands in a velvet beetleback. Yes, she'd nailed me all right, I was fast by the short hairs—

> The maiden caught me in the wild
> Where I was dancing merrily,
> She put me into her cabinet
> And locked me up with a golden key.

The old strife was still clapping her gums together. 'Oh we were young, we didn't know how to be happy.' 'No more than the grass knows how to grow.' I topped her up and had a strong reflex. 'Oh sir, I couldn't do with any more.' 'I thought so, mam, but you didn't notice it.' 'Well, since you're so kind.' 'Not me, mam. It's not my beer. And Plantie doesn't know so you needn't feel an obligation.' But she didn't hear a word, she was too old and interested in life, her life. 'So there we were, cat and dog.'

'There you were,' I said, trying to leave her there. 'And Grandma.' 'Well, mister, I couldn't put her in the street neither, could I?' 'You were too kind.' 'I wouldn't say that, mister, you wouldn't expect it at eighteen, but I knew what was right.' 'Your mam taught you.' 'Well, I shouldn't have liked it if I'd let my grandma go to the Union. Not but what I didn't keep on at Bill; why shouldn't his sister take her? She had two spare rooms and an old husband that was glad not to be in the road. But there, it's what the Book says,

them as does a penny stint for a penny pay has no call to yammer—no, not if some others that ought to know better dodge out till the whistle. It's for the Lord to judge—He'll send 'em where they belong.'

'And what is the proof of God's intentions for the world, a world of mutual love and peace,' said the skate, working himself up and answering his own questions like the end man at the minstrels. 'It is the family—'

And she heard him, he got through. She wagged her nose up and down like a policeman sending on the traffic. 'Oh that's a true word, oh yes, it's the family. And my family was as good as his, better. *We* never had no one in the Union, not even in the bad times, not in the eighties. Never. But there, Grandma was a trouble, worse than a baby. She couldn't keep herself clean, and all day it was, 'Oh, I'm nothing but a nuisance and a burden—oh, let me take myself away to the workus.' And we had a baby too, a real one. With the two of them I was nigh out of my mind, well, I was never at one thing but I ought to have been doing another. I didn't take my eye off baby before he was at the kettle or the fire, and when I went after him, Grandma would be falling downstairs and breaking herself, she was that brittle in her bones.'

'Yes,' I said, 'yes, it's well—just what you say—' for I was worried. I was in great anxiety about my brown. I'd just got her nicely fixed between a couple of Baltic tramps and a Norwegian timber ship when all at once she began to sink away into the dock. Oh, my God, I said, stop her, and I made a grab at her hair, but it turned to water in my hand, H_2O with accidentals.

'Well, I hope I was a Christian too, but it was work, work, work. I was fair off my head with it. And when Bill got to grumbling too, I put a bucket of suds over him. Oh, that was an awful day, right over his Sunday suit.'

'Well, mam, if you ask me, he asked for it.'

'Oh, I had a temper too. Oh crims, what a temper I had.' And how she liked to remember what a temper she'd had.

The brown was nothing but brown again, nothing but a slop of beer, and I gave her up. I drank her up, good-bye, sweet brown—good riddance. For, hurray, I was at peace again. A free man. Free to go into society.

'Tell me, mam, how long did your grandma last?' 'Oh, a long time. But we got her fixed up in the end. Well, we had to do something or Bill and me would have broke up.'

'A nasty problem,' I said, and I even crossed one leg over the other like any half gentleman of leisure talking to a half-sister of charity in a half-way house in Half Moon Street. 'And after all, the modern institution is said to be greatly reformed. I have sometimes thought of it for myself. At least it would give one, as I know you yourself, mam, will agree, something that both of us, as, shall I say, reflective and even thoughtful persons, have greatly missed—freedom from the daily grind—peace of mind—time to get to the, or should I say, toward the, yes, bottom of things. And from that point of view, the so-called workhouse or Union—'

'Union, mister—whatever are you talking about? Whatever do you think we were? Why, we'd have starved first. No, we never thought of no Union, we got her into bed. Of course it meant a lot more work and expense too, but you knew where you were with her.'

'Yes,' I said, 'I can see that myself. Everything organised. More work perhaps, but a better job. A real job and that's a real comfort.'

'Oh, dearie yes, we made her comfortable. Not much thanks neither. But nothing suited Grandma. Oh, if you'd heard her creating. Grumble, grumble all day, and saying every next minute she'd walk out.' 'And did she?' 'Oh lawsie, mister, without her clothes'. 'What, you took away her clothes?' 'Oh, never, we wouldn't do such a thing, but they were all put away and you know what clothes are when you're in bed. They get all wore out, and the buttons fall off.' 'And how long did your grandma lie in bed?' 'Oh dearie, you may well ask—fourteen, sixteen year. Oh a turble long time it was too,' and she

chewed her old lips as if she still had a bitter taste on them.

I wasn't shocked, which was some satisfaction. It showed how free I was; when I'm free I'm never shocked. I'm too spread out; too unbraced. I sing to every breeze. I took another look at the old lady and thought a bit of an old spectre perhaps, not much oversoul between the ribs of her imagination. But what I say is what would we do without 'em? If a white hope needs a chip of firebar in his left glove, where would he be if he could not depend on the ferrousity of the metal? Damn it, I asked, where would the Almighty be if His back axle could go soft and turn itself into macaroni? Nowhere. Absolutely. 'Sixteen years,' I said. 'More than you do for murder.' 'Ah, you may well say it was like jail—and worse too. Because we looked after her proper. Why, the washing alone was a punishment. For I never let her lie dirty. Nobody ever saw my grandma, which wasn't mine neither, in a dirty sheet. Jail! It was slavery. All the years of my twenties—the sweetest time it should be.'

'Do you know,' I said, and I was feeling so social I uncrossed my legs again to come forward into confidence, 'I never had any twenties at all. I was at an art school, and when I wasn't an infant in arms, I was an Egyptian mummy, dead about ten thousand years—' but just then my eye happened to rest on the bottle next the sink and I had a shock like a young man's fate for there was my brown beauty peeping from the bottle; and my rusty red in a letter on the label, canoning together like a duet of burnt angels. Of course, as soon as they felt my eyes upon them they began to turn pale and edge away at the corners. A blue, I cried, Oh God, a blue, send me a blue quick, and I was rummaging round the cellar for a new sky when plomp, down came my old dungarees from heaven with the new patch on the left cheek and pinned the lot to glory.

> This cabinet is formed of gold
> And pearl and crystal shining bright
> And within it opens into a world
> And a little lovely moony night.

'And then the drink'. The old woman, much revived by the last draught, sang this out so loud that I nearly fell out of my vision.

'Which one?' I said from the middle of Beulah.

'My gaffer'.

'Did he, indeed?'

'Well, you couldn't blame him at the first, with me so young and only just started in a job and working all hours, and babies crying half the night, and he wasn't a fly-away, my gaffer, he took it all serious. Nothing too good for Grandma nor the babies neither. Wondering if I'd left a pin or whether onions was good for my milk. Well. I always did like a Spanish onion—we all do down in Hereford. And trade going up and down all the time like a weather-glass in the back end of April. No, it wasn't surprising if he took a bit of drink now and again. All his mates did the same. But I couldn't bear to hear him falling up the street—I couldn't bear to see my belongings in such a pickle. And then to have him kicking my pots about, and being sick in the scullery. Oh my, oh my, I used to give him such a doing—one washing day I hit him with the dolly—my laws, I thought I'd killed him.'

She sucked in her breath, wheeoo, enjoying the agony of that moment when she'd killed her Bill. But I was all in the blues. Those dungarees were more of a general limit than a going-away suit. What we want, I suggested, me and brown, is something between a sailor's collar, straight from the pusser, and the middle of a gas flame—say a night-blue—yes no, yes—not too thick—a London night-blue—yes—but not too fat—what about a Sunday blue, on the other-worldly side, yes, somewhere over the Bank on a Sunday in August. And I knew at once I'd got something—in fact, a masterpiece; in fact, the secret, the key, the combination which opens all the cabinets with a flick of the wrist. In fact, a row of masterpieces, the everlasting miracle of grace turned on at the standpipe in the rose garden. A child could do it when Nursie wasn't looking. Somehow I'd got that bottle with the yellow label in my hand. But I didn't look at it. I just stroked it and smiled. I was as full of smiles as a butler at a peepshow.

Another England there I saw
Another London with its Tower,
Another Thames and other hills
And another pleasant Surrey bower.

The old contriver was looking at me as if I were a house on fire and then she looked at herself to see what I was laughing at. But at last she grinned like Essex clay in a dry summer, opening her ancient earth. She was too old to have any pride—she had lost even her suspicions.

'That gave him something to think about,' I said, not so much social as friendly, as one resting on the Jovial cloud among the eternals. 'That improved his organs of perception.'

'Well, he did get better, and then he got worse, and drinking in the house.'

'Ah,' I said, 'that's bad. Speaking as a family man, in fact a three-family man, I should say that was the beginning of the end.'

'Well, sometimes it was and sometimes it wasn't. Well, in the house you could tell him to stop. Not that he took any notice except to give me a slap. Oh, it was awful the way we went on, and the language. Hawkers was nothing to us when our mother was up. And I could give him better than he gave. Many's the time he'd have liked to cut me off by the throat.'

'My friends, is it not to the family that all rulers must look for the strong foundations of their states and a model for the kingdoms of the world?'

'And did he cut your throat?' I said, touching the yellow label to feel how yellow it was, how unique in its yellowness.

'Of course he couldn't. Because he knew and I knew, and he knew I knew, he couldn't do without me. It wasn't only I was his wife and kept the house, but I was earning. Three days a week charring at the schools. We needed it too, the children's boots alone was enough to walk in your sleep. Ah, many a time I drove him mad wanting to break my teeth and remembering he couldn't afford to lay me up. Then we was so fiery too. We had our hot blood still, and right in the middle of all, he'd give me a look, you know what I mean, one of those looks as if you'd forgotten to do your bodice, and then it was a pat and a squeeze. 'Come on, Sukey, what's it all about?' And, well, I'd think, what's the good of being proud, it won't butter the parsnips nor mend the stockings, which, God knows, is crying out from the basket. And so I'd swallow my last word and say, well, perhaps it's the rain or something, I never could bear a wet Monday—it's not doing right by a poor woman.

'And bless you, next minute we'd be at it again, serious as if we'd never done it before. Oh, crimini, it makes you laugh and it makes you cry. Oh crims, but love is a comical thing.'

And I smiled, but a bit solemnly, for I'd just been faced with a challenge. I saw that if my yellow got to playing around with blues, that noble and high-minded brown might die. Already it was turning sad, I did not dare to look at it in case we both lost our nerve and made a mess of our rather delicate relations.

The old wife gave a snigger. 'Oh, my souls, yes, it's comical. Well, I could tell you, sometimes the tears was running down my cheeks. It's like being in two places at once.'

'Like Lady Macbeth,' I suggested, 'in Elsinane in the old Old Vic—sleepwalking, with that blashted second carpenter in his ten-pound walrus boots falling down the backstairs right into the firebuckets. Twice in one act is too much even for tragedy.' I thought. 'Though if I know anything about housewives, mam, I'll bet she knew quite well in all her places exactly what she was up to, and just what she was going to make of it,' I threw out, making conversation only, for in my fright I'd grabbed at an idea, just as it was wriggling past the corner of my eye.

'Oh, I'm not saying I was any better than I should be. Half the time I was calling him boozer, I was boozy myself. Oh lawsie, yes, for having it in the house and what with Grandma and the children and the carrying pain in my back, I got to sipping. And you know what that is; if you get hold of it, it gets hold of you. Drink is mutual.'

But I was digging fast to catch that idea. I'd seen its tail, so I knew it was there. 'The inevitable end,' I said to mam, to cut her off; 'it's what they always say, wine is a mocker.'

'I wouldn't say that neither,' said she, casting herself back into the gallons of the

past. 'We had some good brew in our parts, it gave you what we are looking for, yes, oh yes, many a time we was uproarious together, and then we would go rampaging, and after that we would be doting, dear a dear, I'd often sooner a black eye, he was that fierce, snapping and grabbing at me as if I was a bone that wouldn't be eat. And goodness knows I was no bone then, I was as tender meat as ever felt the rolling pin. Well, I never had time to lose my childing fat, I had fourteen in thirteen years.'

'Fourteen,' I said like any philosopher, 'into thirteen'. For I was deep in my own guts, digging like any mole after a wire worm. 'It was—it was—what would you say yourself, Mother—'

'Oh yes, I would too—all that and more, oh dearie yes,' and you could hear her turning her tongue over it like a piece of hot ginger. 'Half the time you was so crowded out, inside and out, you hadn't room to think, much less to drown yourself.'

'I know,' I said, 'they do it on purpose for the glory of God or something.' And I filled her up for a stopper.

'Oh my gracy, I really had enough, and me a blue ribboner too. But I don't know what it is, it makes you feel different.'

'War, crime, disease, all the evils of the worldly state, grounded in cruelty and guarded by the violence of the law. Friends, your legal society is a fraud, it could not stand for a day except it was founded upon the eternal rock of love and loyalty, of mutual tenderness. Does the father call upon the law to take vengeance on the son, does the mother send for the police to help support her authority?'

And the old woman turned her nose sideways at him like a parrot looking at a pill. 'And that's not so far wrong neither—he's got sense, that young man. I never used more than a slipper and I never boxed an ear, well, I said, it's bad for the drum and they don't remember it neither, you don't have to sit on your ear.'

Pink, I said to myself, like a baby's bottom, no, yes. Here, why, what, I don't believe a word of it. And to divert this attack from the air, by removing to a comfortable spot by the haystack, I smiled upon old Vorwarts. But with too sudden a beam. She had a surprise that electrified her bugles. 'No mister, I'm not.'

'No,' I said, sympathetic but wary, 'You're not. You can take it.'

She shook her head. 'It wasn't the beer but the spirits. It was when we got to the gin—it flies so to the temper. Beer, they say, makes pillows, but gin makes rocks and razors, and just when Bill got a chance in the yard to go as foreman, we had some real nasty feeling in a lorry and Bill fell off and broke his arm in three places.'

Impossible. It just couldn't happen. Not pink, not to me. 'That was a bad business, mam,' I said with natural indignation. 'Three places, it looks almost like spite.'

'Well, mister, what I think is, it was to come. It followed on, as you might say. You see, we'd been celebrating that job which was our first bit of luck, and I fell off the same time, but I was on top, and then I had my seventh the same night, that was Tom or perhaps she was Sally, the poor morsel only lived the week and what with everything we pretty near tore the place down—oh it was an awful time.' She smiled and the blood came up in her cheeks; she was enjoying the awfulness of that time. 'Oh I don't know how we came through. The neighbours went to the landlord and she comes down and gives us a week's notice. And, of course, there was no more cottages in the village, so Bill lost his job too.'

'What a scandal.'

'Well, it was her own property, and you know what property is, worse than a child for looking after. Well, I tell you, we'd broke the firegrate, solid iron, broke it right through and I don't know how. It might have been Bill's foot or my head.'

'Yes,' I said, 'or no, not your head.'

'Well, you know how it is in liquor, you could break in the wall and not be any the worse.'

'No,' I said. 'That is, yes, it's a proof, isn't it? Nobody can't really not believe in God, it's not scientific.'

And just when I was surveying the triumph of soul over matter, a sweet little pink gave a smile in my heart and opened his eyes and there was a babe new born out of the very middle of *Pears Annual*.

My dear, I said, surprised with joy. Of

course you are a darling, and I quite see that if I brought you in, you might stop my blue and my yellow from making all that noise and frightening my poor gentle brown into the coal hole. But only by surprise. You don't really belong, my dear, you're not an inspiration, but a little bit of fun. Yes, you make me laugh, you give me quite a Christmas feeling.

Another England there I saw
Another London with its Tower.

'Broke in three places, it was.'

'I believe you, mam, because it was the same as your husband's arm—you wouldn't make it up.' For in my innocent joy I sported with the daughters of Beulah.

'And there we was, in the street, Grandma and all, and Grandma calling the neighbours she only wanted the Union. Well, I said to Bill, didn't we just ask for it?'

'At least you were relieved of your grandma.'

'Oh, my laws, we couldn't do that. Not when we was brought so low. No, we had to take Grandma along.'

'What is the cement of the wall of Babylon? Is it not faithfulness? Does not even the anti-Christ *Führer* of Germany, does not he, even he, exalt faithfulness?'

'Losing your home,' I said, and I dare say the pink had affected my voice a little, I'm a sensitive chap, especially to colour. 'I'm sorry for you, mam. To be turned out of the old home, that's a real disaster.'

'Well, mister, I don't know. If we hadn't been thrown out I suppose we should have stuck there. And it *was* old too, pretty near rotten. And we got a new bungalow on the buses right next the town with a proper tin roof to beat the sparrows. What's more, Bill got another job, a real good one, bailiff to an old lady. Well, Bill didn't know farming, but neither did she, and so he was able to put a bit away. All our eggs too and scalded cream and fresh butter as much as we could eat. We should have been well off if it hadn't been for the drink, and Grandma screaming at the neighbours if we only left two inches of window, how we wouldn't let her out. Well, she'd got it on the brain.'

'Yes, typical obsession of old age!' And I thought, all the same, something in that line, not exactly pink; just pinkish and kept firmly in its place. But no, it's a trap. Give pink one chance and she'll trollop all over the place, and wreck the family name if it's got any. And I said in passing. 'I suppose now, mam, that you could take Grandma into the back garden now and then for a quiet run in private—say at Easter and Christmas.'

'Oh dear, mister, you couldn't do that with our grandma. She was that venturesome. She'd no sense. And that weak too. Well, you know how it is in bed, you get so lively in your temper and so weak in your legs, you're fit for nothing but your meals. She might have fallen down and broken her leg and that would have been the end of her.'

'I see,' I said, closing my eyes to shut out Plantie's wall. And there I was, in a pink world. 'I see,' I sighed, 'after all, it's not so much an open question as what you've got on your plate, and can't put off.'

'And Bill getting so he didn't know if it was spots in front of his eyes or bugs on the wall.'

If I must show it where it gets off, I thought, I could creep up on it with a Berkshire brick or a tiled roof or a Dutch barn. And then I got a start, for there was poor Maria Martens' wounded breast bleeding pink at me. And I made a discovery. I saw that that pink was a discovery. And as you know, it's not so easy for an artist to know that his discoveries are discoveries, not so easy but very important.

For there right underneath the poor girl's body stretched in the farmyard was my lovely brown, lovelier than ever, in pools of what-you-may-call-it. And a pink farm cart with a blue tail. And Maria's blood floating on the muck. Exactly so, the very thing, bringing your pink right into the main issue, right down into the muck. Oh lovely muck, a bit of glazing there, touch of Peter Paul, feels within feels. 'Yes, mam, I agree with you there, I'm with you all the time.'

'Why, he threw the bread trencher at the sprigs in my Sunday muslin because they sat up at him, when it was only the plim of my bosom. Is it a wonder I was nip, nipping before the milk?'

'Yes, my friends, it is the devil's doom to steal his brightest weapons from the Lord, and to see them turn against his own vitals. For faithfulness, that has such mighty power, is strong by truth and hates a deceiver.'

'And that's a true word,' said she. 'For one fine day when Bill got the horrors in the greenhouse, he took a new prong and chased his old lady and spit her too; we heard her screech from half a mile and thought it was murder or worse. And his own men off the farm tied him with hay-bands and the doctor said he must be locked up in a 'sylum.'

'Murder,' I said in my hurry, trying to lay it up for reference, 'and it was locked up', hastily rubbing a little beer into the label to get my muck darker, and then rubbing it through to the bottle to get the shine of a reflection in Maria's pool of blood. But do what I would, that brown began to dodge away into the manure, into just another piece of life on the farm.

I knew what I wanted. The only way to stop a colour from lying down in the dirt is to set another colour after it with a gun. And I took a bit of beetroot off Plantie's supper and put it on the maiden's breast, a rose, no, Maria's blood. It wasn't quite right, it made poor Maria look like a utility primp on a lemonade advertisement, but it brought her alive, especially her hair, yes, horse chestnut, keep it down and it fires up inside like Chingachgook. It made me laugh and it made me cry.

'In a sigh—in a sigh—yes, a sigh sigh lum,' I responded with choral sympathy. 'But you saw it coming, mam, it followed as you might say.'

'My laws, yes, you can always see it coming.'

'All ways—al-ways,' I murmured, 'always and all round—coming—coming.'

'But when it's going to come and what it's going to come like—that's the teaser.'

'Tea,' I said, busy as a sparrow in a straw yard, 'the tea-tea-teaser,' and I licked a bit of sugar bag and stuck it on the glass just to see what it would do to Maria's hair, and the gold on the muck. 'Yes,' I said, 'that's what keeps you on the hop.'

'Oh, yes, mister, yes indeed, for when Bill got sober after a week or two, he told the old lady that it was family trouble getting on his brain and of course she'd never liked me being a bit full-blown, and her on the flat side, and she lent him fifty pounds to pay off his score, and what not, and then he took religion and stopped it. Well, it was a barker in the cattle market selling the number of the beast and he'd gone in there to lie like a hog where the carts wouldn't cut his legs off. But when he woke up he heard this chap like a steam circus, and he thought it was Judgment Day. So he thought of how he kept on having pains in his heart and how two of his uncles had mortified in hospital with the ulcers and he stopped it.'

'Judge—Judge—Judgment Day,' I said, bursting into loud chirps, 'and he stopped it.'

I spat upon the blue to lower its cheek and raise its dander. 'A stop was put to spots, and spots.'

'You can't believe it, mister, can you? Just like that it was. Well, I didn't myself though I saw it—not for years. But he stopped. Out of that chap in the cattle market selling the end of the world and God's grace for sinners. And then he got after me too.'

'He threw all the bottles against the wall and made me breathe on him three times a day, and if he felt so much as a skim of liquor he'd take pokers and strops to me. Oh mysie, the latherings I had, carpets was nothing. And he would say it was kill or cure because of my soul and because he loved me. And so he did, oh dearie, oh dear, worse than ever, being so respectable and getting back to his religion and missing his darts. Well, they say the forties is the true doting time, and I believe it. There was one night the neighbours thought he was murdering me, and called the police. But when the constable broke in, Bill had got him to the second lesson and I was down on the flour bin; oh crims, it's no wonder the officer threw his truncheon, you'd have thought it was murder yourself only we was arguing so loud.'

'The everlasting fountain of revelation, the continuing miracle of grace.'

'Happy days,' I said, 'happy days, if you think so,' for I was interested, it seemed

to me that I was getting there, wherever it is, with my blue. I slapped on another bit of sugar paper near the brown, reflection of the cart-tail. And yes, and yes, my muck was on the move. Yes, see, all aglow and ashine as if she felt the harvest in her guts. Ah, I thought, I knew that brown was a sweet thing, but only now do I see her real possibilities.

> Another maiden like herself
> Translucent, lovely, shining clear,
> Threefold each in the other closed
> Oh what a trembling, pleasant fear

Yes, I thought, it's enough to frighten a rope dancer, that pink, but I'm not going to be frightened. No, I'm not, and I gave a lick at the beetroot to take off its ambiguities. Never.

And I gave it two more licks. It's got to be a real pink, a pink, tottering on the edge of the Christmas supplement, a sublime simplicity, out of the ridiculous by damned innocence or pure impudence, or any other of numerous co-respondents including Renoir.

The old woman was goggling at me as if I had had enough, and so I looked serious, and I said to her, what I always say when I haven't heard the conversation of anyone over the age of forty-nine: 'That was bad luck and yet it wasn't so bad that it mightn't have been worse.'

'No, nor it was, and a lot better than we deserved, taking us as them that had a good start. We had our gaiety, and bless you, after Bill cured me of the drink—'

'Bill—of course—it was Bill who—'

'Not so much Bill neither as I took religion too. Of course, I'd always been a Christian, but after I'd got it again I went in the Baptists and they don't allow so much as beer. Well, I thought I needed it so bad I'd better take it strong and we began to save that same year. And though, trust her, Grandma would go and die the very first week we ever had the rent ready, and put that and fifteen pound of debt in a two-coach funeral, we got a lodger for her good front room and in pretty near no time we were that rich we bought a nice terrace villa warm both sides with the kitchen fires, and a bathroom and watercloset. Oh gracy, what a jubilee day when we went into that house. Not but what I was ashamed of the furniture in the open street coming out in rings and the children quite mad and running in every minute to pull the chain. And if you said a word, saying they were urgent and doing it too as often as not. And if it was only the excitement to see it roar like real waterfalls, how could they know? Children don't know their own pipes any more than birds, Well, they don't know what they don't know, do they, and the bigger they grow the more they're backward. But they had that chain tore up by the root the very first day. Oh, it wasn't Bill nor drink nor religion neither that turned me grey and spoilt my sufferance, but the children. It's no good saying about them like you can of a husband, good riddance and forget him and get on with the next thing; well, you know he'll come if it suits him, and if it suits him likely it will suit you or you can shoo him off till when. But you haven't got no hold on a child. Oh crims, the things they did to me, getting married to wasters and creepers. Why, my eldest ran off with a tinker, and my Sam, as good and clever as he was six foot high, went in for the horses and made a mint and then he came home with the police after him and it took half our savings to keep him out of prison. And then he made double what he did before and went and got killed out of an aeroplane and left all his money to a girl we never see or heard of. At least she didn't get it after all because it was all bills. There was never a day for forty year I didn't get my palpitation about Sam and he wasn't the worst. Oh it's children that wear a body down. I was an old woman before I was fifty.'

By this time I'd licked the beetroot into a pink like a pink gin, a lovely lucid pink, and I thought, that's what I want, not a solid but a space, not a cart or a murder, but a sky, a pink sky. Rather post card, you say, all right, damn your eyes—who said I was frightened? And what you've got to remember is that the sublime is always ridiculous—look at bishops—look at poets—blast me, I'll make it a pink sunset. And yes, split my weasand, a tiger, tiger—Maria's hair shall be my tiger, tiger, and the muck shall be a forest pool, yes, yes, with sunset reflections. What do I care at my age? Let 'em all come. You can

only die once and I've been through it so often that I know it doesn't last. Yay, I'll beat the world—it won't notice anyhow. And I stove off the old devourer with a well-tried pass, 'Such is life, mam.'

'Oh, my laws, mister, but that's true. Oh, my lawsie, that's a true word. Don't we know it's true?'

'It keeps on, it keeps on, and then it starts all over again.'

'Oh my crimini laws, never a moment's peace if only to do your cupboards out. Not for a woman, a family woman.'

'You were a good mother,' I said, giving myself a private pinch to make sure it was me dreaming that tiger. 'That was the trouble, the better the worse.'

'Dearie, dearie, the better the worse. But there, it's nature, and Bill's sister that never had no children, well, she cocked herself up for her looks and her house which was certainly a picture for the paint and the ornaments, but a poor mammet after all, a piece of nonsense. I pitied her. Well, you can dress up a mopstick like a moral and gramophones can talk down a bishop.'

In my pride and joy I was moved to give myself away. 'When I went in for art, old lady, or rather when art went in for me—'

'But it was my youngest that gave me the trouble, oh the cross she was. Right from the beginning. Well, it was even better than that, for she tried to come three months before her time and kept me so nervous I couldn't so much as blow my nose. And after all, a month early and fed with a squirt. Oh the ploy to rear that child. Wouldn't suck, wouldn't take her pap, and the tantrums, screaming herself into fits, oh, you wanted to strangle her, but, of course, being so delicate, you couldn't so much as look sideways. And with all your trouble, growing up crooked because she wouldn't eat her mince. The best beef mince off the fresh rump, full of blood it was, nothing was too good. Why, Dadda would have bought her lions and elephants only to give her some meat on her poor little sticks.'

The old songster's chittering fell upon my corn like spring rain, a bit sharp, but who cares on a honeymoon. And as I wandered in the land of Beulah, sweet world of perceptions, I thought how nice it would be when the President of the Royal Academy came to me in tears and a government Rolls and threw down his top-hat at my feet.

'I know, Mother, I know,' and I came in so loud that two Christians in front moved their ears back. 'She was Dadda's dream—his chick, his chick, his chicka-biddy dear.'

'Oh, she was, but there, we both spoilt her. It's natural with the youngest. Thinking there's no more to come, and losing your stomach, and Ady with all her miseries, catching everything she could—we spoilt her, that's the truth too, I see it now, we spoilt her.' I gave her some more beer. 'Never mind Ady. Drink up and be happy. You're only old once.'

'Me, mister?' and I saw at once I'd made a big mistake. Her nose turned verd antique with indignation. 'Me, mister? Speak for yourself. It's only my teeth—I forgot 'em on top of the piano.'

'That's all right, mam, and mine are at the pop-shop. You see, a chap must eat, even an artist. Due to the body of this death. No offence, mam, catch as catch can and all's fair.'

'It's not me who's old, it's Bill. Oh and he is old, you wouldn't believe it. Oh my laws, I ought to be at home. Supposing he was to have another fit and fall in the fire.'

'Don't you worry, mam, he's got his Ady.'

'Well, Ady does look in sometimes, but I hope she wouldn't see him, she's expecting her first in a week.'

'Her first, in a week—little Ady married. But, of course, she's a big girl now.'

'Yes, and well married too, mister, thank God for it. For I never thought to see it. Oh, what a job we had, and chancy—but there everything about Ady was touch and go. You held your breath if you only said good morning. And this chap just a drop-in. He came to see Bill really, he wanted a special prayer about his dreams, and I thought, well, it's now or never, and I asked him to supper. By God's mercy we had an apple tart that wasn't cut, and then I got Bill out to see a noise in the garden and told him if he went back it was my

dead body. And Ady, I must say, we brought her up for a lady, and she could always do the polite to a stranger. But oh dear, she was a lady too—the things she couldn't and the things she wouldn't. It was eight weeks before she let him hold her hand, and after all we had to give them the house to fire them up for coming in the next bed. For she wouldn't have a double, she said it was common. But there, I didn't so much mind going back to the old cottage—less to clean and nearer the work. And the chap turned out a good pennyworth, a bit too pleased with himself but a job at the gasworks, and that's almost government. Oh we was glad to get him. If only she'll keep a hold.'

'If only,' I said, 'if only she'll keep—' for I was a bit scattered. The fact is, I'd taken an eye off the tiger to condescend with the President and everyone knows how dangerous that is in the middle of the big act. When I looked again, the tiger was oozing through the keyhole like Madame Blavatsky in an Isabella nightie, and the sunset was making a face like a Dicksee, a mere appearance. 'If only—' I moaned, and looked round for something to make a mark with. But all I saw was the old helmet grinning at me and wagging her bonnet like Widow Twankey.

'Oh, mister, we know, we know. But what does she know? Oh, these girls, first they're silly and then they're orkard.'

'That's it, mam,' I said in my despair. 'Girls are—I speak generally—' Just then I was aware of a bottle-opener in my hand. It was a bottle-opener for all tastes, with a loop for beer-caps and a hook for more beer-caps, and as quick as I could draw I hooked a line round that tiger, cutting through the label to the glass, and cutting through the pink so that half of it was sky and half reflection in the pool.

'Practically individuals,' I said, 'at least by themselves in Oxford Street.' But as I gazed at my tiger and my pink, lo the princess gave a sigh—my Sleeping Beauty opened her eyes and there she was—there, with all her thisness and her thatness and herself too, the possible she. And when she looked—she looked at me, I fell right out of my background.

Oh, what a smile, a threefold smile
Filled me that like a flame I burned.

'Aren't they just,' the old comrade was croodling in my ear, 'and you can't tell her nothing neither, not in her first year. She thinks she's got the whole tickle at one dip. Not but what the chap thinks so too. He isn't one to complain, not if his meat is coke.'

'Renewed in every age!' The skate was working up to the great amen, giving his celebrated proof that spiritual joy, by the mediation of grace, is God's proof to the world that if wishes are beggars, horses will ride.

The queen mother nodded her crown at him in a favourable declination and continued in her own right. 'A regular mammy's boy. Well, if ever he wet a bed, I'm sure it was dill water. He never said boo to a girl till Ady caught him with that green jumper, his nose goes after her when she only walks round the room. He'd eat cow-pie out of her hand only to lick the dish. Oh, the mercy, he's a proper melting candle at this present.'

'Happy man,' I chortled. 'Poor devil—dirty blackguard.' And as the tiger went winding through the pink, his yellow fell upon my brown and turned her into flame,

I bent to kiss the lovely maid
I found a threefold kiss returned.

The pink, the gold, and the brown, all mine—spirit, mind, and body. And with a bold stroke of inspiration I gave the tiger three whiskers on each side.

'He's caught,' I crowed. 'She's got him, she's nailed him.'

'Dear a dear, that's what she thinks, poor lamb, but you know what it is, take a chap in the spring quick and he'll jump at old iron. Not but what Ady hasn't got something about her. She's not one of your sentry boxers. But it's always the same with daughters, they take after their fathers and the boys get all the looks. 'Ducky,' I said to her, 'you be nice with your Tommy when he comes to and he'll get used to everything else.' But lawsie, you know what girls are, all over the place till she got four legs to her bed and then all over herself. The airs she gives herself, the poor moppet. Oh, my deario, as if you could raise your bread on the map of a man.'

'No, mam, no,' I said. 'I mean, no,' for I didn't like those whiskers. I perceived that I had been jubilating on the barricades instead of organising a constitution. No, I thought, that bloody tiger is devouring my brown and Maria's hair is lost in the smell of his breath. The whole thing is wombwell. What you need for a brown like that is breadth, dignity, the old cremona.

'It's not in nature, he'll rear up one of these days and give her a slap.' The classic touch, I thought. Chardin. Still life in the grand style. And I turned the tiger into a cottage loaf, his head into a brass jug, threw in a pink chop on a blue plate, opened a window behind, with some white washing on the line—a couple of pink flower pots in front and a brown Windsor chair on the right, with a blue reflection in the seat—

> This cabinet is formed of gold
> And pearl and crystal shining bright,
> And within it opens a world
> And a little lovely moony night.

World of the eternal, yes, of the primordial forms, the immortal shore, the everlasting kitchen, the sempiternal sink.

Suddenly all the people got up, which surprised us both, and the old woman, in her anxiety to make the right religious move, poked her umbrella into the Christian in front, who turned round with an ecclesiastical expression. But just then someone began to sing about building Jerusalem, and he was obliged to pass on quickly from his godly wrath, in order to catch up with the tune.

The old front line was singing too. She put up her chin like a duck drinking and opened her beak and creaked like a rusty hinge.

' "In England's green and pleasant land," I like that one,' she said. 'I always did like the Jerusalem hymn. We could do with some building too down our way—decent hardworking girls which you might think they'd earned some peace having to share up with young snoots of daughters-in-law—oh, my mercy, whatever is the time?'

'Not quite closing, Mother, have a quickie before you go—on the house.' For I wanted to fix down one or two details that had come upon me, suggested themselves, seized me by the neck, and said, 'Cherish us, love us, keep us, the daughters of Beulah, and be quick about it, before we perish.' I made a stab at Maria's right shoulder, or the brass jug with the sun glittering on its hair, a sweet double curve leading right into the uprights of the window frame, and there it was, there, a piece of history.

'Oh, dear, oh dearie,' said she. 'It would serve me just right if I miss the last bus and he falls in the fire.'

'I dare say,' I suggested, and all at once I saw a woman would give a better line, because more inevitable; yes, a girl is an intellectual thing, at least on the outside, made up, whereas jugs are little removed from natural objects, mud in the eye. And if the aesthetic supercharge on girls has been used to drive sausage machines, it is still a primary radiation which mixes well with any good pigment; yes, and gets all the lumps into one parcel. Yes, girl bathing, yes, let's be original, get at the fundamentals. 'I dare—yes, I dare say—' I murmured, marking round a couple of legs with a sweet section of the plane of the water, solid as columns, the pillars of the house, 'that your Bill wouldn't mind so much if he were out of it. I mean afterwards—well, he wouldn't even know, would he?'

'Oh, don't say it's time for Bill to go!'

'Well, mam, if Ady has a new baby for you,' and I went up from the lovely thigh, ah, what a pelvis, to the left shoulder, yes, my dear, I thought you were going to turn out something remarkable and already you generate worlds. Yes, if your neck grows so, set upon your shoulders like a tower, not so much of a vertical as a monument—

'Oh, laws, oh lawsie,' the old woman was in a fluster. 'Not Ady—that's just what I'm afeared of.'

'Not Ady,' I said, throwing in a face, any old face with two prods for eyes, to give the angle of poise and its relation with the collar-bones. 'Not now she's settled,' I said. 'Believe me, mam, she'll be quite reasonable now. That's my experience, anyhow. Once you get a daughter fixed up or even down, she usually turns out a very decent sort of girl and quite ready to do the right thing by her old parents.' For

though I don't suppose I have any daughters, I've had a lot of other people's.

'Oh, dear, that's what they all say. Oh, and she does too. She's got it on the brain about me going out to scrub, and it not being right in her position. It's why don't we come home to her back room and live nice like she'd choose for her dear papa and mamma?'

'You ought to be proud of your Ady, mam,' I said, knocking in a castle or barrack, to give a dotty pattern on the right. 'You did a good job there.'

'Oh, my souls, and there's that husband of hers. He'd do murder for her. You know what young husbands are, especially the soft ones. Oh but I know, mister. They're getting up a plan. Come, Mother, she says, you've had a hard life, what you need is a rest. Soon as my gaffer goes they'll have me in the sheets for the rest of my life.'

'All the same,' I said, for I was not at all sure that the poor old thing was fit to look after herself, and really some of these aged persons get so cranky and irresponsible they are a danger to the public as well as themselves, 'all the same, Mother, you wouldn't have her not caring, would you? At least she knows what's fitting,' and it came upon me like the last trump, a warehouse with four rows of windows in perspective and a yellow wall to keep the pink from turning into ice cream. Yes, and the maiden will have to be a Lascar with a bit of red rag round his neck, or no, a Negro washerwoman, a fat one, mountainous, sublime. I stuck a piece of sunlight on the bottle to get the sunshine. And the vast maiden smile, oh what a smile, a threefold smile. Just then Plantie turned down the light to a glimmer, meaning that it was time the meeting left him to his supper. But I had patience, a bridegroom has a lot of patience, I mean, once he has the girl safe in his pocket. A millionaire has a lot of patience, I mean, when he has his millions in gold and buried in the garden. I just sat my maiden on my knee, keeping a loose but affectionate hold round her neck with my right forefinger and thumb, and pressing slightly down in case her bottom might slip off my trouser; and turning to the old comrade I said to her with the encouraging tone of a prophet at leisure to notice particulars, 'Think of it, Mother, no more work to do, no more trouble, and none of us like the work, do we, not after the first forty years?'

'Oh, I don't mind how I work so long as I've got my own place. And I can scrub too. I'm stronger than you think for, mister. And time's no object neither. Well, I don't need so much sleep as I did. Six o'clock I'll start and bring my own bucket, a shilling an hour.'

I wanted to look at my treasure, my masterpiece, but the Christians were still blocking up the door, and the lights were too low to see in the scullery.

'No hurry, mam,' I said. 'We can't get out till the crowd moves, and what's the harm with here. It's warm, it's friendly, and we know what we know. We're old at this game, why rush off from a good place to a worse?'

The fact was that a taxi had just come wheeling to the door in the street above. I suppose it had come for the skate, and its lights were sliding across the whitewash of the area wall toward the scullery window. In another few seconds, if I did not move, I knew I should be able to take another peep at my maiden. And I wanted a peep very badly. For, as no doubt you've noticed, though a chap has looked at his girl a thousand times in an hour, he always wants to look again. To see what she's like, what she's *really* like, once and for all.

I couldn't wait another minute. The beam was swinging and I prodded my nose at the bottle. Yes, yes, I thought, there she is. And then the light came full glare, and damn if I could see anything but a beer bottle with a lot of dirty scratches on the label, a nasty mess. I was so surprised that I let it drop on the floor. Then I gave a laugh that made the poor old frame beside me quiver like an angel's harp. 'Come on, Mother,' I said, 'time to get back to it,' and I placed myself humbly in the Christian stream, rolling its sons away.

Of all the damned fools, I thought, to be caught that way at my age. But it was no use abusing myself to show how wise I was and restore my self-confidence. My bottom had dropped right out and nothing could put it back. I consisted simply of

a big dark hole full of windy passages and swinging doors with broken locks.

'I beg your pardon,' I said, as one of the Christians trod on my foot. 'Excuse me,' I said as two of them combined, by a mutual instantaneous movement of brotherly sympathy, to grind together the fragments of my hollow ruin, and squeeze out the rest of my machinery. 'I'm awfully sorry, I fear I pushed you.'

Thus encouraged, the Christians made a strong effort and drove my lights into my liver. I was pierced by such an agonising spasm in the lower belly that I thought, ah, gone at last, done for, ruptured, unless it's appendicitis. Only ten minutes ago I should have been grieved by this miserable and lingering end to a promising career. Yes, promising freely. But now I'm glad. The more I suffer, the more I shall be delighted. Because I asked for it—

> I strove to seize the inmost form
> With ardour fierce and hands of flame
> But burst the crystal cabinet
> And like a weeping babe became.

Boo-hoo, hoo.

Suddenly I noticed that the agony in my belly was old Faithful's umbrella. And I was just going to mention it to her when we were both ejected into the dustbins. And I saw that she was in some distress.

'Why, mam,' I said, 'what's the trouble?', for my grief grieved for all the babes in the world.

'Oh, I don't want no comforts, I don't want to go to bed.'

'It's a difficult question, mam,' I said, for I wasn't going to have it on my conscience that I broke up a family, 'and you've got to consider Ady's feelings, too. She's been a good daughter to you.'

'Oh, but she's that obstinate, mister. Oh, these girls, especially the good ones, they go on just like fire engines.'

'To tell you the truth, mam, and speaking entirely for yourself and not for the church and the future of civilisation, I'd say, take your brush and your bucket and slip off to some new professional beat, and put up a new plate in a new name. And to hell with Ady.' For I felt my doors banging and I didn't care a Saturday shave for the Pope of Rome. 'Yes, mam,' I said, 'because it's nice to be nobody, it's grand to be a piece of dirt and laugh at boots.' But just then I noticed the street lamp falling on a red door with a brass handle, and a slight earthquake banged all the doors in my interior. So that the wind pouring through the keyholes played a soft chord rather like the Siegfried horn.

No, I said to myself, not on your life. I'm a free ruin, an irresponsible ort without a care in the world. To hell with composition. And I said to the old woman, 'Tell them you'll die in your damp, and take up your bucket and beat it for dear life.'

'Oh, you don't know Ady, she'd come after me—there ought to be a law against it.'

'There is,' I said, and the Siegfried motif was so loud that I spoke with great firmness, averting my eyes from the red door. 'A lot of laws. Love, including family love, is fifty different kinds of offence according to age, sex, and religion, and which bishop saw you at it. But after all, homes are paved with Acts of Parliament—'

I looked boldly at the red door, to tell it where it got off, and instantly it blushed pink. The Siegfried song burst into a full orchestra and my corridors bulged with white waistcoats.

> *Another* England there I saw
> *Another* London with its Tower.

'And as for art,' I said, 'it comes under the head of undomestic animals, to be shot at sight with airguns, catapults, pisspots, coal, shoes, double-breasted Purdys, crossbows, rods, tear gas, case-hardened bureaucrats with their noses filed off, blister bombs, art-crickets, Mark IV's, complete, with their balls in their waistcoat pockets, *capax episcopari*, and all other missiles accredited under the next act, in retrospect, with the exception of those listed in the Minister's secret administrative ukase, subsection 999, fertilisers required in the present emergency, *floreat in aeternum*, for the production of cabbages for the production of members of Parliament for the production of papers for the disposal of fertilisers and the general expedition of the starry wheels, and yet it goes on—like rats, bugs, moths, and beetles—it goes on biting and digging and scratching and undermining everything.'

'Oh, my soul, mister, wherever is that bus,' and she was crying dry, like an old dog. 'Oh, but I don't want to go to bed.' Just then the bus came along and I heaved her into it. 'Good-bye, Mother, good luck with the brush—God help you if you'll let him.' But she didn't even look. She didn't even hear. She'd forgotten her meeting. She'd forgotten me, her old new friend. She projected herself half way down the bus at one umbrella charge, and her eyes and bonnet and nose and chin were all racing each other to get in front, to get nearer home. And it struck me all at once that the poor old thing was old. Yes, she was old and that was a state of affairs. I felt for the poor old battle and then I felt for myself to make sure that I was not slipping away, while no one was looking, into my grave. And when I found myself, I found myself quite confused, as if I had lost something. My youth, I thought, good gracious. But no, it was my pink. And when, all in a sweat of fear, I stretched out my neck to look for her, she popped out from behind the red door and stood there, the darling, in nothing but her pure self. Ah, how like a true pink, so simple, so frank, so trustful. No more pouts, no more secrets between us any more. I fairly flew to her,

The maid had caught me in the wild
Where I was dancing merrily.

'My beauty,' I cried, 'my fulfilment, my life, I have you at last, and you shall have me, in happiness ever after—after? AFTER! HI, STOP HER SOMEONE. STOP DARLING, DAMN YOU, DARLING.'

A FRAGMENT OF FACT

CHRIS MASSIE

STARTING from my home in Whitby, with the fanatical enthusiasm of youth I had traced out a cycling itinerary which would keep me in touch with the sea round the walls of England until I reached Blackpool, and from there I proposed to cut through the hills back home to Yorkshire.

Embarking on this ambitious programme, I found myself one evening, between the hours of ten and eleven, cycling through the flat country of the sea reaches at the mouth of the Thames. While it was yet light, I had had fully communicated to me the melancholy desolation of that bog-held situation, heightened by the weird cries of some marsh bird I did not recognise.

The day had become sticky with heat: a sullen, breathless atmosphere which made cycling a conscious effort. Sweat oozed from my hair down my forehead, and past my ears, to trickle down the open neck of my cricket shirt. The journey was uncomfortable and uninteresting and, having taken a long by-path route, there was nothing much on the way to engage my attention.

When night fell, I had hoped for cooler conditions, being so near the sea and the river; but as is not unusual following such days, the night air became closer and more menacing. The air was so dense it seemed I was cutting through a solid surface; and indeed the conditions were something like this, for a low, clinging mist had come up from the marshland, and I could not see more than a few yards away by the light of my lamp.

I might have made the journey without considerable discomfort had I not become intolerably thirsty; but it was too late for an inn to be open, had I encountered one, which did not seem likely on this inhospitable by-path.

Growing weary of pedalling, and feeling the need of sleep as well as drink, I got off my bike and made my progression on foot. On either side of me stretched miles of dangerous bog-land and, though closed in

by the mist, I was fully aware of the treacherous, naked countryside through which I was passing.

Now I was on foot travelling slowly; the sticky, warm mist seemed to impede my path by definite resistance. I was tired, thirsty, sleepy, and uncertain of my whereabouts. It was a source of considerable irritation to me that I was almost in touch with the most populous city in the world where every comfort might be obtained at any hour, and yet, for the predicament I was in, I might have been lost in the Sahara.

I plodded on feeling very stupid, regretting the foolhardy presumption which had turned night into day, and overtaxed my endurance. I reflected irritably on the folly of taking by-paths in a fantastically situated country like England. For the first time I deplored my solitude. I had made similar tours with one or more companions, but had found that, however amiable company might be, two ideas were not better than one on the road. Arguing at cross-roads had a mean and spoiling effect on a cycling holiday. But the situation was getting on my nerves. I am one of those peculiar people who are not comfortable in wide, flat, open spaces; and though at this hour I could not *see* the dreary prospect, being closed in by the mist, I could feel it in every nerve of my body.

'I don't suppose there's a house round here for miles,' I was thinking, when to my great relief I could see through the mist a bright patch to the right of the road which indicated, high up, the window of a lighted room.

I pushed on anxiously in the direction, and was soon aware that the light came from a house standing some distance back off the by-path which was approached by a wooden gate which I opened, and against which I rested my bicycle.

The way up to the house was hedged on either side by some tall evergreen. It was perhaps fifty yards to the main door, and such is the peculiarity of the abominable torture set up by thirst, that now I was within sight of quenching it, my sufferings from that cause were inconceivably intensified. What if I should fail to get a drink after all? On that short journey I dwelt on pints, quarts, gallons of ice-cold water from a deep well, and in imagination I was quaffing greedily.

As I drew near, I saw the head and shoulders of a man, enormously magnified, pass across the window blind. The shadow had a downward projection, as if he had made a sudden sweeping movement to the floor. I rang a queer, old-fashioned bell which had to be pulled out and let go. A swift peal clattered through the house, which subsided with the lessening vibration to one or two isolated sounds before it ceased altogether.

I stood there, self-conscious, foolish; remembering having made a similar request for water when a child, and how graciously I had been received by a good woman, and accommodated with two juicy apples to follow my refreshing swill. But I was a young man now, and the hour was late.

There was no stir in response to my ringing. Impatient, and desperate with my need, I rang again, and listened once more for those last, halting reverberations. This time I had succeeded. A foot was on the stair. A moment later the door opened, and a voice out of the darkness, for there was no light in the hall, asked, 'What do you want?'

'I have been held up in the mist,' I replied. 'I am very thirsty and would be glad of a drink of water.'

The man stood for a moment as if in deep thought. It was then I noticed his enormous proportions, not only in height, but girth and shoulder span. He was well over six feet tall even in the attitude in which he stood, with head bowed and shoulders humped. His long arms hung in dragging, helpless fashion at his sides, like an ape's.

'Come in,' he said. 'Come into the light.'

I followed him, and he touched a door and said, 'Go and wait for me in there. I will be back again soon with what you want.'

The room I walked into was only feebly lit, giving a twilight effect. It was a large room, but very barely furnished. Though it was obviously a dining or sitting room, a deal table took the centre of the room, and there were three Windsor chairs in various positions. There were no pictures,

and nothing of comfort and pleasure in the apartment. I thought by this evidence that the house was unoccupied, and that the man I had seen was the caretaker.

He returned in a few moments holding a heavy bowl in both hands, and as I was still standing in the middle of the room, he brought it straight forward and placed it in my hands, so that now I was holding it in precisely the manner he had done a moment before. It was an enormous drinking vessel despite the thirst which oppressed me. I looked down into the water, and saw round the edges at the bottom a dark stain that might have been a sediment of mud.

At that moment I looked up at him in my vexation, and in the dim light I saw his face. The huge size of the man suggested the lineaments of a gorilla, and I expected to be revolted by his appearance; but he was not like that at all. He wore a beard which to the worst of faces adds a venerable sort of dignity. His brows were heavy and overhanging, so that his eyes were invisible in these cavernous projections. His nose was long, with a melancholy downward depression, and his mouth hidden beneath a drooping moustache.

'This must have been a mistake,' I said, indicating the water.

At once he reached out with his immense hands and took the bowl away from me. Without a word of explanation he left the room, and I could hear him descending stairs.

I was alarmed, and inclined to make my escape from the house in his absence, for I had noticed, as the bowl swung round in his hands, the word DOG on its glazed earthenware surface.

In the state of thirst which tortured me, I was appalled that this unmannered giant should be so lacking in all human consideration as to offer me a dog's trough from which to drink. And not a clean one. But he had returned before I could come to a decision, and this time he was bearing a jug and a half-pint tumbler.

He set them on the table in front of me, and invited me to sit down. When I had done so, he sat down opposite me on the other side of the table. He looked across at me in the dim light and made this extraordinary statement: 'Between your first ringing at the bell and your second, my wife died. I was attending to her upstairs. That will explain my delay in coming down to you.'

The words were uttered simply, as a matter of course, in a deep but gentle voice with unexpected culture in its phrasing.

For the moment I had nothing to reply. Between the first ringing and the second I had been thinking of that good woman who, when I was a child, had supplemented a cooling drink with two juicy apples; and precisely at that moment a woman had died. This, for some unknown reason, seemed to invest the information with a special horror. I felt myself a most insolent intruder.

'I humbly beg your pardon,' I said, getting up. 'That is most terrible news. I ought not to have blundered into the house in this fashion. I will be going now, and thank you for your hospitality.'

He stood up when I did, and with a quick movement preceded me to the door, lifting his hand in a manner which suggested I should be seated again.

'Don't go,' he said. 'I am glad of your company. There is no one else in the house. And I'm not used to this kind of thing. Perhaps it is a trifle unusual in a man of my age, but this is the first time I have seen death happen to . . . to a human being . . . It so happens that her dog died only this morning.'

'And your wife has died almost immediately after the dog?' I asked for no particular reason.

'Yes,' he replied. 'My wife was very fond of it; indeed, she idolised it.'

'Was your wife's death sudden? I mean, were you expecting it?' I asked.

'Yes, I was expecting it. Both my wife and the dog were very ill.' He hesitated a moment then continued, 'When I say I expected it, I was not expecting it at that moment although she was so ill. I had been intent on her condition, trying to make her position in the bed more comfortable, when I heard your first ring. My mind wandered at the psychological moment. It's often so. At the psychological moment we are not there; our minds are floating about in time. That is life's illusion; so much of it is lost in ranging back over the

past or trying to explore the future. Then we look at death, and it is all over.'

His remarks were too metaphysical and self-conscious for me to answer. I merely nodded and sat down again. It was ridiculous to stand in the middle of the room and listen to such conversation. He also returned to his chair.

'Between your first ring and your second, she died,' he went on. 'I had been nursing both of them. I mean I was attending the sick dog up to the moment when it died.'

'What sort of dog was it?' I asked.

'A sheep dog,' he replied. 'One of those grey-black, shaggy fellows with the peculiar white-ringed eyes that seem blind, but are far from being so.'

'Oh, yes,' I replied casually, but I was suddenly oppressed by a breath-taking sensation of unreality.

He sat before me in idle helplessness, observing me occasionally, and then turning a glance towards the door.

'When the dog died, it was impossible to deceive her about it,' he went on. 'At all times of the day she asked where it was, and implored me to bring it to her. It's lying there now, at the foot of the bed.'

'Do you mean that your wife is dead, and lying at her feet is a dead dog?' I asked. He had just said that, but the picture it brought to my mind was horrifying in the extreme.

'She made me place it there,' he said. 'Her wish was that they should be placed in the same coffin.'

'But no undertaker on earth—'I began.

'I know,' he replied. 'I know. But it was her last wish, and I cannot bring myself to bury the dog. I cannot sum up sufficient courage to take it away from her feet.'

'Don't you think,' I asked, for the situation was worrying me, 'don't you think you ought to be upstairs with her instead of here, if only to make sure she's dead? . . . And really I must go; I have an appointment.'

Another thing had occurred to me.

'You ought to go for a doctor,' I told him. 'Shall I call on the first doctor I come across on my way? What's the name of this house?'

He made no reply at once, then he said, 'I must think the matter over carefully. You have no idea what it is like to live in this lonely situation. It was no more than a bond to keep them together until they died. Why should I go upstairs again? I have done my part. I shall be going to the village tomorrow as I have always gone, to get the meat and vegetables, and I may call on a doctor then.'

'May!' I almost screamed. 'You simply must!'

'Must, then,' he concurred.

'I'm sorry,' I said. The words seemed particularly futile, utterly absurd.

He did not reply. He was resting his head on his hands, with his elbows on the table.

'I must be going now,' I said. 'Thank you for the drink.'

Again he did not reply or even look up. I passed out of the room into the dark passage, and very quietly opened the front door and closed it after me. I dashed down through the dark evergreens, and jumped on my bicycle. As I was getting up speed, I heard the pad of feet and a snarling behind me. The next moment the heavy bulk of a big animal caught me broadside on and nearly unseated me. As the handles swung, my lamp was brought round to the creature's face, and I saw a pair of savage eyes. It was a sheep dog.

He came at me again, and lifting my foot from the pedal, I jabbed at his nose with my heel; but it was a push rather than a kick, and he was not hurt. He bared his teeth and leapt at my handlebars, and the lamp, coming off its fittings, dropped in the road and went out; but he had fallen without getting a grip of me. Before he had completely recovered, I rode on, and for a mile I heard him pattering behind.

'That must have been another sheep dog,' I reflected.

An involuntary shudder shook me so that I swerved on my bicycle; but this was not on account of my affray with the dog, but because that strange man with the unkempt hair and beard looked so much like a sheep dog himself.

I did not tell my story to anyone until I reached home. It has remained with me ever since, and from time to time I turn it over in my mind in an effort to clarify and rationalise it; but it remains insoluble.

JAN VERMEER'S

VIEW OF DELFT

BERTRAM NICHOLLS

FROM *The Times*, 15 June 1950: 'Here . . . is the extraordinary Italian tradition of fine workmanship. . .; *even* when used in the painting of pictures it is impossible not to observe it with genuine, *though possibly reluctant*, admiration.' This is the pass to which our contemporary thought has come. Only the italics are mine.

Well, here is an example, though not in the extraordinary Italian tradition, of fine workmanship. An eminent expert has written of it, 'This unique work is certainly the nearest which painting has ever come to a coloured photograph.' I well remember my first sight of it when I was a very young man: it struck me very differently. It has been a haunting memory for me ever since, and whenever I have seen the picture again, it has surpassed my recollection. I am indeed one of the many thousands of picture-lovers who have stood before this picture with a sort of awe. A practising painter may well be humbled to the dust by its 'fine workmanship', which is indeed unsurpassable, and is the more remarkable for the fact that Vermeer rarely strayed into landscape, and only once into a landscape of this character with its aerial expanse of sky. The picture is in fine condition. The green of the trees has altered a little, as Vermeer's trees did. They may have been glazed with a fugitive yellow such as orpiment, but it must be remembered that Vermeer was a master of one of the loveliest yellows to be found in painting. As we see it today, it may have faded a little but, if it has, it has only faded to a greater perfection. Of design in the sense of pattern, the picture has little. The clouds are beautifully massed, but their linear movement is scarcely related to any movement elsewhere. The little figures on the extreme left serve but to people the landscape, but the two principal foreground figures are vitally important. Perfectly placed, and a little smaller than life, they enhance in an almost magical way the sense of serenity and emotional intensity which lifts the picture far above fine workmanship on to the plane of the very highest art. There is not the least false emphasis, not the least distortion, not the least straining after effect, nothing bizarre, nothing melodramatic or nightmarish; it is a clear and limpid statement of the artist's vision. I remember once hearing some talk about Crome, disparaging him for the lack of this quality or that, when a voice struck in, 'Yes, but there is something everlasting about Crome.' Well, there is something everlasting about Vermeer.

LETTER FROM PARIS

ROBIN KING

FEW observers of the Paris literary scene could have failed to notice recently that there has been a definite change of mood among young and old writers. The *Angst*, the despair, the insistence on the incommunicable loneliness of human beings, which characterised so much post-liberation French literature, have given way to a more creative sense of proportion, to a sardonic sense of humour and to vigorous writing. This is noticeable in the new batch of books, published recently, which have been much discussed, for October, November and December are months devoted to the frenzy of prize-giving. All one hears is debates on who is to win the Prix Goncourt (the most coveted of the prizes, since it sells a million copies or so over here), the Theophraste Renaudot, the Prix Femina, and about a dozen lesser ones. Anglo-Saxons tend to regard these prizes with some awe as marks of distinction; and though there is no doubt that a good many books so 'crowned' are good books, the literary French will tell you, with a cynical air, that there is a good deal of 'cuisine' about it all. And by 'cuisine' the French mean darkly that certain things go on behind the scenes. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that there is another problem, too: the fact that there are too many prizes and too few books of merit to receive them. Thus, each year, a critic is faced with the same batch of twelve books being judged for all the prizes; the confusion which results is naturally hectic.

The confusion of late has been all the greater since one novel—Serge Groussard's *La Femme Sans Passé*—has been cited in all the papers and salons as an obvious choice for almost all the prizes. As it happened, the first of the juries to decide was the Prix Femina; Serge Groussard was awarded it after a few hints had travelled along the literary grapevine that some people were in favour of François Mauriac's nephew.

In my opinion, it was a good choice. Serge Groussard has already proved himself a novelist to reckon with, for, though he is only thirty, he has written some five books—of which *Pogrom* is considered his best; he has been decorated with the Légion d'Honneur for fighting on the Loire in 1940, and has distinguished himself in the Resistance. Yet, despite his war-like past, *La Femme Sans Passé* is not a gloomy war book, but a traditional, sardonic description of a drama between a sailor, a myserious woman, and the captain of a barge plying the rivers of France. The author is humanist and Roman Catholic in his attitude: human beings for him are weak and frail, but always capable of moments of beauty and tenderness. His story concerns the barge captain's meeting with the mysterious woman outside a deserted church. What intrigues the captain is the reason why so well-dressed and obviously such a well-born person should be wandering about so late at night with such aimlessness. Torn between curiosity, pity and sexual interest, the captain invites her to make the trip with him on his barge to Paris; and it is against the beautifully-described background of river life that her drama is unfolded with a skill that delights the imagination. Chiefly through the machinations of the solitary sailor, who objects to the arrival of the woman on board, it turns out that she was in flight, having shot her husband in particularly sordid and unpleasant circumstances. Sadly enough, human nature being what it is, the captain does not cease to believe in her, or, for that matter, to love her with a genuine tenderness; the horror of her acts is only a barrier which puts her beyond attainment. More than that, once

the murder has been confessed, the woman sees the only possible path she can take: being a Catholic she realises that she would have no absolution without penitence; accordingly, at the end of the trip, she goes off to give herself up to the police. So much for the plot. What is remarkable about this novel is its living qualities, its atmosphere (M. Groussard has some of the same tricks as M. Simenon), and its psychological understanding. M. Groussard's talent is undeniable, but it is surprising that he should have achieved widespread recognition (and the Prix Femina, in France, means fame) at the early age of thirty. He has worked extremely hard against difficult odds: for a young writer's —or painter's—life is harder in Paris than in London or New York. Over here a writer is paid so badly (500 francs or just under ten shillings a page for an article; twenty pounds for a novel) that he can barely exist. The quartiers of St. Germain-des-Près and St. Michel are full of aspirants leading the kind of lives that kill whatever ability there is, long before it can be tested. Even youngish and established writers, who have one or two books to their credit, find themselves trying to exist on ten or fifteen pounds a month. Most of them (if they do not become anarchists) take jobs, but here again this is hardly a solution, since the life of a bank clerk or an office worker is worth twenty pounds a month. Serge Groussard worked in an office for a while but, as he told a reporter of *Le Monde*, he preferred the gamble of writing all day to the security of a job that would certainly use up whatever energy he had long before he got home to his typewriter.

Curiously enough, Paul Colin (who has just been awarded the Prix Goncourt for his first novel *Les Jeux Sauvages*) was also on the border-line of starvation when he heard of his award. He had tried many kinds of jobs—he had even been a farm labourer—before the Prix Goncourt confirmed his desire for writing novels.

Other young novelists who received votes in the contests have at least had some publicity, and no doubt they will be materially helped in their careers. At least one, Michel Zeraffa, who received a vote in the Goncourt for his second book, *L'Ecume et le Sel*, cannot afford, despite a certain success, to write all day: he recently accepted a job as Professor in a girls' school in America, where his spare time is devoted to writing.

Other writers confirm the traditional note. I do not know whether it is a coincidence or not, but nearly all the books published last year—Jacques Robert's *Les Dent Longues* (published by Julliard), Hervé Bazin's *La Mort du Petit Cheval* (published by Grasset), Jean Orieux's *Cinq Filles Et Un Fusil* (Flammarion) and Pierre Boule's *William Conrad* (Julliard)—are almost nineteenth century in form. Is it that, tired of so much experimentation, of war subjects, acts of violence, and prisoner-of-war stories, French writers are returning to pre-war classicism? Jacques Robert's book, for instance, *Les Dents Longues*, a story of a newspaper-reporter's sensational rise in his career, seems to have found its inspiration from Maupassant's *Bel Ami*: while Pierre Boule's *William Conrad* is a sardonic portrait of an English family during the late war. (The Continental, it appears, is deeply shocked to discover that the English, faced with heavy bombing and the threat of invasion, still show their passion for convention and custom by drinking tea as usual, undisturbed.) Both these books could have been written before the war, since they reflect nothing of the preoccupations of a Sartre or a Camus. Indeed, the only sign recently of the old post-liberation *Angst* appears in one book and one play. The book, André Bay's *L'École des Vacances* (published by Gallimard), which was considered to have a good chance to win a prize, is deeply infected by the Sartrean virus. Here death, and the thought of death, interior emptiness and intellectual sterility are given as much insistence as Sartre gave to Daniel in *Les Chemins de La Liberté*. One has only to follow Bay's hero, Jerôme (who has taken his family for a holiday to Brittany) to recognise the familiar accents of despair and to see the workings of his inevitable self-destruction. Jerôme epitomises that grey creature who emerged in France after the war with his spirit dead, his intellect neutralised, whose only fate was suicide. On the other hand, the play, *L'Invasion*, by

Arthur Adamov, which has just been produced at the Studio des Champs Elysées, though not quite so obviously influenced by Sartre, nevertheless has the once familiar preoccupation with loneliness. Adamov is a serious writer of ideas, but his thesis—on this occasion the hopeless impotence of man when he tries to communicate with others—is not dramatically realised. What Jean-Paul Sartre did so well in *Huis Clos*, for instance, Adamov has failed to do in *L'Invasion*.

These examples of *Angst* and loneliness (both of which, it must be noted, end logically in suicide) are recent exceptions, and the fact that both book and play fail as works of art is perhaps a sign that French sensibility which, like the body, is just as often a war casualty, is recovering its former wit and vigour. Another instance of this can be found in the political world. Early last summer a number of politicians and writers—who, it was said, could face neither Coca-Cola nor vodka—revived a new 'theory' called 'neutralisme'. Its aim was succintly put by the first person to write about it (Claude Bourdet in articles in *Combat* during 1948 and 1949): *La neutralité européenne est la meilleure plate-forme d'union pour l'Europe.* The cry was taken up in various papers —*Le Monde*, for instance, which is the French equivalent in seriousness to *The Times*, said gloomily that if the world was faced with a third world war it was 'not impossible' for Europe to remain neutral —but the whole crux of the matter lay in the French horror of a third world war and their desire, if possible, to be an enormous Switzerland without its protecting barrier of mountains and on the edge of the Atlantic. The Communists attacked the theory bitterly—*L'Humanité* shouted that, if there was to be the crime of another war, the crime should be attacked and not ignored—but M. Petsche and M. Valay once supported the idea in the Chamber. However, recent events have put France much in the position of a pancake in the paths of two oncoming tanks, and 'la neutralisme', like all the other isms, has faded away before the urgency of imminent danger. Nowadays one hears far less of being neutral and far more of fighting. (The favourite pastime, for instance, of soldiers who have recently returned from Indo-China is chasing Communists across the Place Pigalle and beating them up in bars.)

Yet, despite the evident return of France's natural vitality, there is no doubt that France's coffers are emptying faster than they are replenished. The Government is counting its pennies with a slightly embarrassed air, and though they put on a good show for Balzac's centenary, there was a slight sensation recently when Jules Romains suddenly resigned from being President of the 2,000th anniversary celebration of Paris due to take place this year. The papers asked awkward questions, but it later transpired that M. Romains, with the grandiose imagination of a novelist, had hoped for a vast and extraordinary expenditure, for a really befitting pomp; instead, he found the Government allowance so meagre that he retired from the scene in disgust.

In other fields—particularly the world of painting—the same trends are evident, though where money is concerned, young painters could hardly be worse off than they are at present. A young French writer, for instance, can always earn a few francs by writing articles, but a painter has not even got this slender thread to tie him to existence. Worse, for him, are the difficulties of exhibiting his work, since all the big and important galleries are given up to 'modernists' who have now become so generally accepted that they are almost traditional masters. A common sight these days is to walk into any café on the Left Bank to find the walls covered in canvases which, week after week, remain unsold. And even such brave shows as took place in a Left Bank Hotel (transformed, for the occasion, by a group of young painters into a gallery) which quickly became news value because of its originality, hardly stir the lethargy of a public who are used to a Picasso or a Masson.

However, despite this, I doubt whether there is any other city on earth showing as many exhibitions as Paris at the moment; in two days art critics here have described some thirty such shows. The chief point of

interest is the present tendency of the 'modernists' to return to nature. Picasso, for instance, has almost abandoned his abstract symbols for sculpture; and at André Masson's show there were about forty canvases, of which only one was a portrait, and a couple that were abstract; the rest were peaceful landscapes, which contrasted oddly with the Symbolist and Cubist paintings of his previous manners. The same trend could be noticed at André Marchand's new show at Galerie Carmen, and, like André Masson, André Marchand has returned to landscape painting around Aix-en-Provence and Arles.

Among playwrights, too, there is a move to find a new approach in an old tradition. The most sensational new play—Jean Anouilh's *La Répétition ou L'Amour Puni*—has surprised Paris critics and has achieved the success of a *tour de force*. In the first two acts Anouilh has gone back to the classic manner of Marivaux, mixing his own dialogue with the author of the *Double Inconstance*; so that, as one critic remarked, it is impossible to tell where Anouilh begins and Marivaux ends. It achieves, as Jean Jacques Gautier put it in the *Figaro*, 'a kind of perfect classicism'. Anouilh's theme is love—the ironic, courtly flirtations of another century which turn, for the philanderer, who is the hero of the play, into the pains of real love; the last act deals with a modern conception of love, of its terror and horror. In thus contrasting the Marivauxian wit with the sordidness of family life as it could be today, Anouilh shocked many people; but he made his point brilliantly, as the controversy, which broke out afterwards, showed.

This habit of indulging in storms of comment, which is so typically Parisian, is nevertheless always a surprise to an Anglo-Saxon in whose country questions of art tend to be the preoccupation of a small minority. But Paris takes its art and literary news with the same gusto as it takes to politics—and often, as in the recent libel action launched by David Rousset against *Les Lettres Françaises*, it all gets mixed up together. The Rousset action has taken up pages in the French Press, which treats the affair as excitingly as it would deal with a *crime passionelle*. And, as in the recent Kravchenko case, the proceedings have turned into a fiery debate of shouts exchanged between the Communist and Rousset's lawyers. The essence of this case is that the Communists have accused David Rousset of fabricating facts in his long reportage of Soviet concentration camps which have been published serially over the past months. For his part, David Rousset has countered by producing witnesses to prove his facts, but, as usual in a French court, few people ever stick to the point. The debates, the opportunities for insult and for wit (which the French love so dearly) are fully exploited and neatly condensed for the breakfast reading of the public. Even François Mauriac (in the *Figaro Littéraire*) has added his civilised, catholic passion to the debate: 'take off your mask, M. Wurmser.[1] Admit that a State of concentration camps corresponds to your way of thinking, that, far from wishing to destroy the camps in Russia, you want to extend them over the whole planet . . . '

The Communists, as usual, have shown themselves to be adroit in the art of turning white into black, but they remind one somewhat of those crazy scientists in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, who spent their time extracting sunbeams from cucumbers —and perhaps, in Russia, it has even come to that.

[1]The defendant

On seeing a copy of the Odyssey in a Public Lending Library

RICHARD CHASE

How can you build a palace
With elements of steel?
How construct an Odyssey
Out of this limbless past?
The Melancholic stirs his cup
And waits on Chance

Frightened houses line the street
And the milkman leaves the milk:
Beyond this certain destiny
What waits? What stirs?
Did Helen wash her silken hair
And hang her linen on the line?

In summer gardens roses grow,
Under the cherry Baby cries
And richer relatives employ
The service of an autocar:
The bell rings in no Hero—
It is Edward with a book

The Melancholic turns the page,
Finds a line to quote at tea,
Whispers of a golden sailor
Who set out in company:
The cabbage leaves are turning
Yellow; the butterfly's a pest!

On the loom the suitors stand
With prayerbooks in their folded hands:
Uncle Ted was once a Captain
Wounded in seas of asphodel.
Did Helen wash her silken hair
And hang her linen on the line?

The tealeaves show no ship
A-sailing: no wind upon the sea,
No dark seavoices of temptation
Climbing the wreck of everyday:
How to build a wooden prow
With garden fork and kitchen saw?

Uncle Ted strokes his chin
And holds the Baby on his knee
While the blackcat checks his glance
(Glass eyeball in a Grecian skull!)
'The Younger Generation do not notice
The seawind upon the pier.'

The Melancholic drops a tear,
Dreaming in the crowded room:
Writes a line upon the flyleaf
And vacates the best armchair:
Who has seen the marble glisten
Where the waves break into land?

Who has heard the temple echo
To the shouting of the crew?
Drunken they lie under the sky,
Under Aphrodite's shadow,
While the dawn draws a white line
In the dregs of the barrel

Steelcast frames shake the window.
The house rocks on its cheap foundations
(Uncle Ted always complains!)
The Melancholic shrugs his shoulder,
Stirs his empty cup again.
'Tonight there will be rain.'

Did Helen wash her silken hair
And hang her linen on the line?

EXCAVATION

HENRY TREECE

As singing winds discover
Intricate root and vein
And excavating rain
Turns old bones over,

So pick-and-mattock men
Prise open buried places,
Scrape lichen from stone faces
To see them smile again.

But it's mere alphabet
To light tall pediment,
Hardest remains; spade can't
Reveal the beating heart!

Tot up the daisied meadow—
Easy alternative
To making stone words live!
Behind each moves a shadow.

Frightened by reason's frost,
Like soldiers in strict rows,
Letters stand, comatose;
But friendly ghosts are lost.

NEW BOOKS

CRISIS IN BRITAIN: Plans and Achievements of the Labour Government

By Robert Brady.

University of California Press: London, Cambridge University Press. 37s. 6d.

Reviewed by E. Penning-Rowsell

Any English author who attempted an appraisal of the Labour Government's policies and deeds would be automatically suspect of weighting his facts and prejudging his conclusions. It is therefore appropriate that the first critical account of Labour's post-war record should come from an American. Professor Brady, financed by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research of California, spent eight months here in 1948 in investigating the background and content of the Government's programme.

Both supporters and opponents of the Government will doubtless search the book for confirmation of their own viewpoints. An American professor would be a useful witness for either side. In fact, it is doubtful whether either Government or Opposition would care to call him. If he is critical of Labour's policies, and still more of their execution, he will not give much aid and comfort to the Conservatives.

Some may criticise him for being destructive rather than constructive; others may question some of his premises, but his carefully-built-up case will take a good deal of answering. It should be made clear that Professor Brady is no critic of the 'anti-British' *Chicago Tribune* school. If he concludes that the Americans are 'the natural residuary legatees of the decline and fall of the British Empire', he does so quite without the gratification of a Colonel McCormick. His approach to our problems is functional and technical rather than political. Careful not to obtrude his views, he has the old-fashioned American radical's dislike of 'British imperialism', of 'Toryism', and of cartels and trusts. Although he appears to have approached the implementation of 'Third Force Socialism' with a good deal of sympathy, it seems to have been largely due to his basic belief that a pre-requisite of British industrial regeneration was some economic and social change.

His belief is buttressed by the statistically-supported argument that the end of the war found Britain ill-equipped to meet the post-war world. Nor could all the blame be laid upon the war and its effects. Britain's 'technical backwardness' was general by 1914, and between the wars 'Britain never staged an effective or sustained industrial recovery.' A wealth of facts is used by Dr. Brady to show that by 1945 loss of empire, alteration of international trade patterns and the new dominance of the U.S.A. 'combined to lay an especially heavy premium upon the need for a drastic, fundamental and comprehensive overhauling of the British industrial system.' Both the leading parties, he suggests, were fully aware in 1945 that economic and industrial reform must be accompanied by social reform. The Labour-sponsored Social Insurance Bills were 'presented virtually as coalition measures', with Mr. R. A. Butler welcoming the scheme on the part of the Opposition 'as part of the mosaic or the pattern of the new society'. The author evidently believed, on the strength of Labour's published programmes, that a moderate Socialist government might be the best instrument to provide the industrial overhaul which he regarded as the key to British recovery.

First he was concerned to ascertain the underlying philosophy of the British Labour Party. He is plainly surprised at the empirical nature of its thought. Sir Stafford Cripps made no bones about the matter, and told him: 'The Labour Party has no philosophy and no theory.' He finds a parallel between Roosevelt's pragmatic approach in his early presidential

years and Labour's 'British version of the American New Deal'. He finds 'Labour's "new look" essentially short-range in its approach, opportunistic in its manœuvres, vague—and generally impatient with discussion—about long-run objectives.' It is not surprising, therefore, that in his painstaking examination of every aspect of Labour's policies, except foreign affairs, he finds evidence of muddle, incompetence and lack of direction. On the grounds of technical efficiency rather than of ideological, he holds that some degree of nationalisation was essential for the fundamental economic changes needed. But he suggests that the form of nationalisation was neither adequate nor in keeping with the Labour Party's professed social programme. State capitalism, he avers, has been substituted for private capitalism.

In discussing coal nationalisation, he quotes with approval Major Lloyd George's prophecy that nationalisation as planned would change little as far as the miners were concerned.

On the most controversial of Labour's programme planks, iron and steel nationalisation, he takes the traditional American anti-trust view. He suggests that the pre-war Iron and Steel Federation was a 'supercartel', and quotes the *Economist*'s strictures on Britain's 'feudalistic system of cartel control'. He certainly builds up a formidable technical indictment of the pre-war steel industry as being out of date, and backs it by quotations from reputable British authors, whose critical statistics he had confirmed by the Federation's research staff. But if critical of pre-war practice, he is no less so of post-war theory. After making a case for a thorough re-organisation of the industry, he is easily able to show that the Government's proposals contain no such plan, and that none exists in Labour Party or Government pronouncements.

The same complaint runs throughout the book. Whether the subject be Town and Country Planning or Industrial Location, objective and extremely ably presented accounts of Government plans, and Conservative reactions to them, are followed by reasoned doubts as to the effectiveness of the results. Although critical of Conservative proposals in general—but

Literature and Psychology

F. L. LUCAS

Mr. Lucas, for many years Reader in English at Cambridge, has used the established standards of psychological knowledge with which to examine many of the great figures in world literature, invented and described before these standards had been set down. In the light of what is known today, how does the conduct of Lady Macbeth and of Hamlet, Rosmer or Hedda Gabler hold together? How, now, are the views of Plato and Emily Brontë? *352 pp., Demy 8vo. 15s. net*

The Diary of a Writer

DOSTOIEVSKY

Translated & annotated by Boris Brasol

This is the first complete translation into English of the Diary which Dostoievsky wrote over a period of eight years, during which time he was also writing *The Brothers Karamazov*. For the first time, it is possible to see into the mind which produced such great works as *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, for the Diary was his means of keeping in touch with life and an outlet for his feelings on a vast range of subjects. *In 2 volumes, 50s. net*

CASSELL

approving of Opposition strictures in particular—Dr. Brady's study should, intentionally or not, do much to reassure those Conservatives who are fearful lest profound and irrevocable changes have been made in the social, economic and political structure of the country.

A remarkable feature of his book is the accuracy of his forecasts, although they were necessarily often written before the events he was describing had run their course. Writing before the groundnuts *débâcle*, he provides a clear analysis of the dubious nature of the scheme. And it was possibly for these reasons, he suggests, that the United Africa Company was not unhappy to transfer control to a Government which would have to bear the responsibility for a plan whose difficulties it did not sufficiently appreciate.

But Professor Brady is not one of those American writers who, while criticising the mistakes of other nations, see only perfection in U.S. policies. Indeed, he is critical of many aspects of his country's policies, particularly as they affect international trade. He admits that 'the United States is the one major industrial country in the world that has done virtually nothing to escape future depressions.' Moreover, in view of American predominance, he agrees that the international economic policies of the British Government, of whatever political complexion, must be of minor influence. But he maintains that if these and other factors in American policy make Britain's economic problems more difficult of solution, they do not basically alter them.

When he turns to the human side of industry on which the required recovery must partly depend, he finds a sad lack of scientific management, and few signs of the much-advertised co-operation between both sides of industry. He refers to the 'closely-knit bureaucracies' of the Trade Unions 'which are run by small inside cliques of more or less co-optatively recruited Labour politicians.'

This necessarily brief account of a very large volume has concentrated on the critical aspects, but the bulk of the book is a factual account, fully documented and written without fear or favour towards Labour or Conservative. As such, it will be an invaluable reference book, which gains by having been written by an outsider. Although unlikely to be entirely welcome at Transport House—or at the Fabian Society which may feel insulted at the author's suggestion that James Burnham is the unconscious theoretician of their party—it will not be more warmly received at the Conservative Political Centre. However, those concerned with this country's political and economic problems should, whatever their political affiliations, find Professor Brady's survey stimulating and provocative.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF PEACE AND WAR

Edited by Prof. P. H. Pear

Hutchinson. 16s.

Reviewed by D. Abse

'You are interested, I know, in the prevention of War, not in our theories . . . Yet I would like to dwell a little longer on this Destructive Instinct which is seldom given the attention that its importance warrants. With the least of speculative efforts we are led to conclude that this Instinct functions in every living being, stirring to work its ruin and reduce life to its primal state of inert matter.' This is from an excerpt of an open letter written by Sigmund Freud to Einstein. If ever attention should be given to the psychological mechanisms that are operative in the production of war, it is now. Millions of pounds are spent on the scientific production of destructive instruments. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are available for investigations on cancer, leprosy, virus diseases, but not one country in the world provides money for research on the psychological motivations of war. As Edward Glover points out, this is a curious example of uneven functioning of the self-preservation impulse.

All the more welcome, then, is this book which consists of papers by nine different authors belonging to the different psychological schools of thought, and who, in ventilating different aspects of war psychology, contribute a work which is more than academically interesting. Dr. Dicks' essay, particularly, which deals with the German character and the hierarchical pattern in

German family life with its adverse effect upon the child, should indicate the value of the anthropological method enriched by psychological clinical wisdom. His studies of the German character based on detailed observations of German prisoners-of-war explain the Nazi, the extreme German, indeed the extreme of a human being, in simple analytical terms of reference, and if his remarks appear glib, they are nevertheless illuminating.

Yet one doubts whether the anthropological method, even when aided by psycho-analytical and statistical studies, is penetrating enough when applied to complex modern societies. Doors are opened certainly, and this in itself is valuable. Geoffrey Gorer's book on the Americans, for example, whilst stimulating and informative, leaves the reader doubtful of its total scientific validity. All the more so Dr. Dicks' paper which, being condensed into some twenty-three pages, hardly ventures beyond the exterior. The door is not even opened, but we look through the keyhole and what we see and what we hear make it necessary for scientists to be given the opportunity to enter and explore National Character meticulously, scientifically, for it is a door to Peace.

Dr. Flugel, too, adds a chapter entitled 'Some Neglected Aspects of World Integration' and if his proposals (the steps in the formation of One World, as one might call them) appear Utopian, it is because nations, unlike individuals, do not accept so stringently ordinary moral precepts. God speaks to the individual in his silence, sometimes to a congregation but seldom to a mass. In war it is possible to say with an element of truth *L'Etat, c'est moi*, but it is equally necessary for individuals everywhere to adopt an adult responsibility to nationhood in peacetime. Then perhaps 'One World' may be possible.

Professor Pear, H. J. Eysenck, Madeline Kerr, Professor J. Cohen, Professor Allport of Havard University and Hilde Himmelweit also contribute to this symposium. Even if this book does not really go deep enough, where the economic factors of war are too often stressed, it is to be recommended wholeheartedly, for it brings to notice the vast psychological aspects that must be recognised if war is to be averted.

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THE ENGLAND OF ELIZABETH

By A. L. Rowse. *Macmillan.* 25s.

Reviewed by Max Beloff

Whenever one feels gloomy about the state of English historical writing, one can console oneself with the thought that in our own days, the single reign of Elizabeth has attracted talents so outstanding, though so different, as those of J. E. Neale and A. L. Rowse. It is sixteen years since Professor Neale showed us how straightforward historical biography could still give us a wholly satisfying picture of the greatest of our sovereigns; now Mr. Rowse comes forward with the first part of what promises to be an equally masterly portrait of the age itself. In this first volume Mr. Rowse describes with a scholarship that is never obtrusive, and an enthusiasm that never flags, the many-sided society of Elizabethan England—a society increasingly differentiated within itself, and increasingly productive in a bewildering variety of directions. In a second volume, we are promised a picture of the achievement itself, of all the Elizabethans accomplished in the material and the physical sphere. It is already clear that the total result will be a picture of an age of English history which has only one parallel in contemporary historical writing, Sir Maurice Powicke's evocation of the thirteenth century in his *Henry III and the Lord Edward.*

But how different are the conditions for such writing, when two such different centuries are in question! From the thirteenth century we retain some noble buildings to remind us of a physical setting of which the rest is swept away. For the people themselves we have to penetrate through the distorting lenses of the official and legal document or the monkish chronicle. But the Elizabethans, intoxicated with the wealth of their own newly discovered language were at every point laying their souls bare, delighting in self-revolution. There is indeed hardly a point that Mr. Rowse makes that he cannot clinch, if he so wishes, with a line of Shakespeare's, or a letter of Burghley's or the Queen's, or a passage from Stow or Lambarde. It is appropriate that Mr. Rowse should begin with a chapter on the Elizabethans' 'discovery of England'. For self-consciousness is of the age's essence. And besides, there are the physical memorials so rich around us. As Mr. Rowse has shown us before in smaller works, there is no one with so magic a touch for conveying to us the very feel and texture of the past.

Indeed, among the merits of this book are that it so splendidly breaks the rules. It is for one thing quite largely based on published sources—and after all, of what use are the labours of the local antiquaries who publish such things (and to whom Mr. Rowse pays proper tribute) except to provide the material for historical genius to play upon? And again, Mr. Rowse is adamant against the conceptual element in modern historical writing. This is social history—not sociological history; and how much better for that! The force of economic change—business cycles and all that—is fully recognised; but its impact is better described through the lives of the people than in figures and graphs. The thing that made the Elizabethan achievement possible was the temporary and precious equilibrium of its social structure—its tensions gave spice to life; but they never made life and government impossible. And this social structure was one of multifarious personal and group attachments, so much more varied than the mediaeval one—much more colourful and inspiring (so Mr. Rowse would argue) than our present age of 'shared and equalised mediocrity'.

For all Mr. Rowse's warnings that 'the responsible historian must . . . forgo the pleasures of generalised reflection', he cannot indeed forbear from an occasional side-glance at this twentieth century which is so much more like the sixteenth than 'the intervening period of civilisation'. Nor can he conceal his own distaste for theological strife so important to the Elizabethans: 'men were in one of those gusts of convulsive idiocy when they kill one another for what they cannot know about.' Nor for Puritanism in its iconoclastic guise; 'so far from the people liking things of beauty, they hate them.' Indeed, the 'idiot people' are not Mr. Rowse's heroes at all. He is all for the 'uncommon man'. And what a wonderful book he has made of it.

RUDE ASSIGNMENT

By Wyndham Lewis. *Hutchinson.* 21s.

Reviewed by Neville Braybrooke

'This is an account of my career as a writer and artist up to the time of writing.' Yet, in the strict sense of the term, neither *Rude Assignment*, nor its forerunner, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), can be designated autobiographical volumes. For Mr. Lewis is not interested in the bib-and-bottle stage of his life and, from his writings, one has little indication if, like a snail, he crept unwillingly to school. On the contrary, in his first excursion into autobiography he showed himself to be a portmanteau-man of the Italian Renaissance: 'I am a novelist, painter, sculptor, philosopher, draughtsman, critic, politician, journalist, essayist, pamphleteer, all rolled into one.' His concern was with those whom he had met in these different capacities: further, *Blasting and Bombardiering* was only concerned with the years 1914–26. *Rude Assignment* is much more comprehensive: it might be described as 'The History of a Mind'.

The book opens with an analysis of the artist's rôle in modern society, continues with a short section devoted to the author's personal career both as a writer and artist, and ends with eighty pages given over to plotting the course of his thinking during the past four decades. To those who have read Mr. Lewis's books as they were published, this last section is something of a recapitulation. Yet it does serve one very useful purpose. Newman was wont to say that to live long is to change often; and Mr. Lewis has changed often. At times one has thought that there were inconsistencies in his outlook but, seen in perspective, one realises that there has been a unifying design. For Mr. Lewis, more than any other writer of his generation, has suffered at the hands of the coteries: if the conspiracy has not been one of silence, then it has been of misrepresentation. For instance, his book, *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926), has been widely proclaimed a manual of how to rule, whereas in fact it is a study of how best to cope with rulers. So it is that much of his new book is of a controversial nature: a counter-polemic against those who have misinterpreted his work. 2

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The result is salutary. After the disappointment afforded by *America and Cosmic Man* (1948), one is glad once more to find Mr. Lewis fully on his mettle. Here is the Editor of *Blast* and *The Enemy* at his best. There are many brilliant asides: 'The author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* only reached the Plain Man of today by way of the bedroom window'; or there is this about compromise for the artist: 'You can pocket your pride and join a coterie . . . Or . . . you can abdicate from your full programme, and take a job. With luck you then go through with *half* your programme. You can marry a rich woman (as did Shaw or Yeats). The danger is that it might assume the dimensions of a *job*.' Again, there is his telling description of his own early drawings of match-stick men, as 'Klee-men', or his quick incisive pen portrait of A. J. Ayer: 'this homely, impassible, intellectual detective-sergeant'. For the old fire still burns in him: that is something which no 'enemy' or clique could extinguish since, despite such attempts, it continues to blaze—and its blaze has been seen by the next generation. For them *Rude Assignment* is essentially the song of a man who has come through.

NOT ALL VANITY

By Baroness de Stoeckl. *John Murray*. 18s.

Baroness de Stoeckl's memory goes back to the Paris of the eighties, that glittering world of *grandes cocottes*, Russian Grand Dukes and the Prince of Wales. She gives, amongst many other stories of that period, the original version of the adventures of a young man who was mysteriously summoned to provide a masked but obviously noble lady with an heir. At eighteen she married the Baron, a Russian diplomat and courtier, and she joined the international circle of Royalty.

Baron de Stoeckl held an important and confidential office in the Russian court. Some Court memoirs are little more than dull gossip about minor or major Royalties, but the Russian Court was, for better or worse, the seat of power, and the people whom the Baroness knew, from the Czar downwards, were the people who were ruling Russia.

These memoirs give a most interesting picture of the Russian Court up to the outbreak of the 1914 war, and of the background against which the vital, and in some cases fatal, decisions were made. The Baroness was in England in 1917 when the world she knew was swept away. From being offered a house at Yalta by the Czar, she was reduced to seeking a job in a dressmaker's shop. However, even though she was not herself a Russian, she had identified herself so much with them that she had even acquired the immense resilience of the White Russians, which gave her the ability to survive and to re-create something of her old world, which, towards the end, centred round the Duke and Duchess of Kent.

'I am now an old woman,' she says, 'and I have known much joy and equal suffering.' With all its ups and downs, her life has certainly not been monotonous, and her account of it makes lively reading.

EDVARD MUNCH

Frederick B. Deknatel (79 illustrations including 6 colour plates). *Max Parrish & Co. Ltd.* 21s.

Reviewed by Penelope Knox

The first good biography and selection of Munch's work to appear in this country. The book is admirable in every way and makes a scholarly introduction to the work of the great Norwegian painter who combined a violent expressionist explosive colour and a sense of pattern not inferior to Gauguin's, with the message of a Lutheran pastor.

In a very good introduction Professor Deknatel analyses the pictures and at the same time uses them to illustrate Munch's eighty years of life and titanic production. It seems as though 'everything happened' to Munch that could happen to an expressionist artist. His father, a doctor, was unhinged by the mother's death from tuberculosis and turned into something not far short of a religious maniac. He paced up and down, up and down overhead at his prayers, descending sometimes into the nursery for loud and frightening jokes. 'Disease and insanity were the black angels on guard at my cradle . . . in my childhood I felt always that I was without a mother,

sick, with threatened punishment in Hell hanging over my head.' As a young man, he was involved in the 'Morality Disputes' —the Liberal Party of Oslo, who, determined to be more radical even than Ibsen, defied the police with Jaeger's novel *From Christiana's Bohemia.*

As a result of his connection with the movement, Munch became obsessed even more than before with the themes of prostitution, poverty and illness. (Jaeger himself, dying of cancer, was carried to an hotel where his old companions could gather round his bed for a last convivial evening.) In 1889 Munch went to Paris—the fateful journey to the south—to enter the studio of Leon Bonnat and there in the Goupil Gallery he saw the work of Gauguin and Van Gogh. He then moved to Berlin where he lived for many years, and where the feverish German Bohemianism, which was much to his taste, led to a kind of Guignol, uproars in wine-cellars, fights with the rival painters and a quarrel with his mistress who had herself laid out as if on her deathbed in an attempt to win him back and subsequently shot him through the hand. In 1907 Munch (who was not without the good angel of a doctor friend) entered a sanatorium for nervous diseases in Copenhagen and came out 'cured'.

And so, by the subtle transmutations of Fate, he grew into the noble-looking, white-haired old man, revered as a classic and not liking to refuse decorations, still painting with canvases, indeed, heaped round his house and exposed to the wind and rain. And he who had been so festive in Berlin lived to see the German armies of occupation in Norway.

It is impossible not to make the comparison with Ensor, for Munch, like Ensor, was a northern genius, in his moral earnestness, his concern with the subject, the joylessness of his conception of love (a kind of bitter contest between the sexes). His obsession with a vast 'Frieze of Life', which would symbolise 'all the joys and sorrows of the individual human' was truly Scandinavian, recalling the second part of Peer Gynt and the alarming statuary of the Park in Oslo. But not of one country, nor another, was his wrestling with the innermost problems of his art. To

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illustrate what cannot be illustrated without looking at the pictures themselves, I quote this description from the introduction of the way Munch painted his first version of 'The Sick Child' (1885–6):

'To find a method of conveying his conceptions of the subject which he found expressed in the pale head of the model against the linen of the pillow, and in the trembling emotion of the mother, was a long struggle of painting and re-painting. Finally he rubbed out the details of the setting which had detracted from the child's head and, as he put it, "let everything stand in masses." In the process of studying the model to find the solution, he noticed that his own eyelashes affected the image, so he indicated it in painting by a network of fine lines over the surface, apparently made with the pointed handle of a brush. It is characteristic of Munch that this evidence of visual concentration that solved the problem was repeated in the version of 1926.'

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FOR FEAR OF WEEPING

By Patrick O'Donovan

MacGibbon & Kee. 12s. 6d.

Patrick O'Donovan went straight from Oxford into the army, where he commanded H.Q. Troop, Guards Armoured Division. When the war was over, *The Observer*, with excellent judgment (and some courage, since he had no previous experience of journalism) sent him as its correspondent to the Far East. This book is based on the material he collected for his paper. It does not claim to be anything more than a collection of impressions, but they are the impressions made on a fresh and remarkably quick mind. His description of the situation in Malaya is as true today, unfortunately, as when it was written. He has most convincingly described the collapse of an exhausted régime in China, in 1948. This is first-class reportage.

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